INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

"Idle tales of dying horrors."
—*Carlyle.*

SECOND EDITION.
[*Revised and much Enlarged.*]

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PROGRESSIVE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

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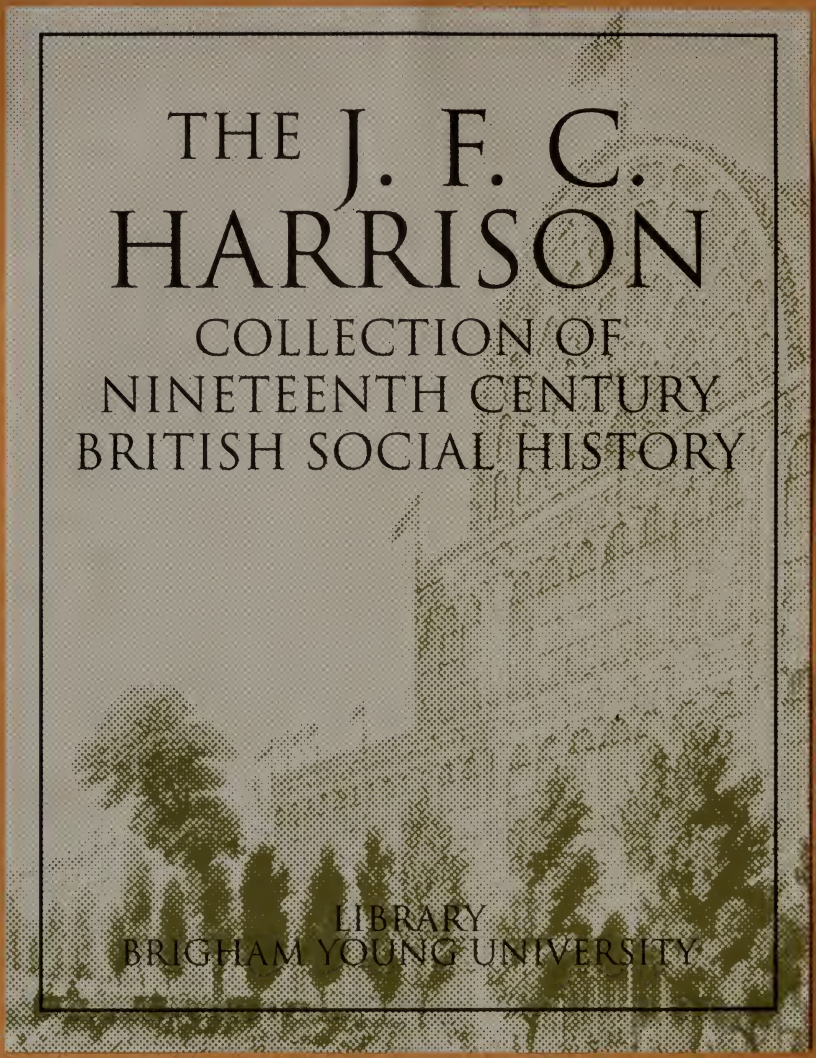
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INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS.

Infidel death-beds have been a fertile theme of pulpit eloquence. The priests of Christianity often inform their congregations that Faith is an excellent soft pillow, and Reason a horrible hard bolster, for the dying head. Freethought, they say, is all very well in the days of our health and strength, when we are buoyed up by the pride of carnal intellect! but ah! how poor a thing it is when health and strength fail us, when, deserted by our self-sufficiency, we need the support of a stronger power. In that extremity the proud Freethinker turns to Jesus Christ, renounces his wicked scepticism, implores pardon of the Savior he has despised, and shudders at the awful scenes that await him in the next world should the hour of forgiveness be past.

Pictorial art has been pressed into the service of this plea for religion, and in such orthodox periodicals as the *British Workman*, to say nothing of the horde of pious inventions which are circulated as tracts, expiring sceptics have been portrayed in agonies of terror, gnashing their teeth, wringing their hands, rolling their eyes, and exhibiting every sign of despair.

One minister of the gospel, the Rev. Erskine Neale, has not thought it beneath his dignity to compose an extensive series of these holy frauds, under the title of *Closing Scenes*. This work was, at one time, very popular and influential; but its specious character having been exposed, it has fallen into disrepute, or at least into neglect.

The real answer to these arguments, if they may be called such, is to be found in the body of the present work. I have

narrated in a brief space, and from the best authorities, the "closing scenes" in the lives of many eminent Freethinkers during the last three centuries. They are not anonymous persons without an address, who cannot be located in time or space, and who simply serve "to point a moral or adorn a tale." Their names are in most cases historical, and in some cases familiar to fame; great poets, philosophers, historians, and wits, of deathless memory, who cannot be withdrawn from the history of our race without robbing it of much of its dignity and splendor.

In some instances I have prefaced the story of their deaths with a short, and in others with a lengthy, record of their lives. The ordinary reader cannot be expected to possess a complete acquaintance with the career and achievements of every great soldier of progress; and I have therefore considered it prudent to afford such information as might be deemed necessary to a proper appreciation of the character, the greatness, and the renown, of the subjects of my sketches. When the hero of the story has been the object of calumny or misrepresentation, when his death has been falsely related, and simple facts have been woven into a tissue of lying absurdity, I have not been content with a bare narration of the truth; I have carried the war into the enemy's camp, and refuted their mischievous libels.

One of our greatest living thinkers entertains "the belief that the English mind, not readily swayed by rhetoric, moves freely under the pressure of facts."[1] I may therefore venture to hope that the *facts* I have recorded will have their proper effect on the reader's mind. Yet it may not be impolitic to examine the orthodox argument as to death-bed repentances.

Carlyle, in his Essay on Voltaire, utters a potent warning against anything of the kind.

"Surely the parting agonies of a fellow-mortal, when the spirit of our brother, rapt in the whirlwinds and thick ghastly vapors of death, clutches blindly for help, and no help is there, are not the cenes where a wise faith would seek to exult, when it can no onger hope to alleviate! For the rest, to touch farther on those

[1] Dr. E. B. Tylor: Preface to second edition of *Primitive Culture*

their idle tales of dying horrors, remorse, and the like; to write of such, to believe them, or disbelieve them, or in anywise discuss them, were but a continuation of the same ineptitude. He who, after the imperturbable exit of so many Cartouches and Thurtells, in every age of the world, can continue to regard the manner of a man's death as a test of his religious orthodoxy, may boast himself impregnable to merely terrestrial logic."[2]

There is a great deal of truth in this vigorous passage. I fancy, however, that some of the dupes of priestcraft are not absolutely impregnable to terrestrial logic, and I discuss the subject for their sakes, even at the risk of being held guilty of "ineptitude."

Throughout the world the religion of mankind is determined by the geographical accident of their birth. In England men grow up Protestants; in Italy, Catholics; in Russia, Greek Christians; in Turkey, Mohammedans; in India, Brahmans; in China, Buddhists or Confucians. What they are taught in their childhood they believe in their manhood; and they die in the faith in which they have lived.

Here and there a few men think for themselves. If they discard the faith in which they have been educated, they are never free from its influence. It meets them at every turn, and is constantly, by a thousand ties, drawing them back to the orthodox fold. The stronger resist this attraction, the weaker succumb to it. Between them is the average man, whose tendency will depend on several things. If he is isolated, or finds but few sympathisers, he may revert to the ranks of faith; if he finds many of the same opinion with himself, he will probably display more fortitude. Even Freethinkers are gregarious, and in the worst as well as the best sense of the words, the saying of Novalis is true—"My thought gains infinitely when it is shared by another."

But in all cases of reversion, the sceptic invariably turns to the creed of his own country. What does this prove? Simply the power of our environment, and the force of early training. When "infidels" are few, and their relatives are orthodox, what could be more natural than what is called "a

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[2] *Essays*, Vol. II., p. 161 (People's edition).

death-bed recantation"? Their minds are enfeebled by disease, or the near approach of death; they are surrounded by persons who continually urge them to be reconciled to the popular faith; and is it astonishing if they sometimes yield to these solicitations? Is it wonderful if, when all grows dim and the priestly carrion-crow of the death-chamber mouths his perfunctory shibboleths, the weak brain should become dazed, and the poor tongue mutter a faint response?

Should the dying man be old, there is still less reason for surprise. Old age yearns back to the cradle, and as Dante Rossetti says—

> "Life all past
> Is like the sky when the sun sets in it,
> Clearest where furthest off."

The "recantation" of old men, if it occurs, is easily understood. Having been brought up in a particular religion, their earliest and tenderest memories may be connected with it; and when they lie down to die they may mechanically recur to it, just as they may forget whole years of their maturity, and vividly remember the scenes of their childhood. Those who have read Thackeray's exquisitely faithful and pathetic narrative of the death of old Colonel Newcome, will remember that as the evening chapel bell tolled its last note, he smiled, lifted his head a little, and cried "Adsum!"—the boy's answer when the names were called at school.

Cases of recantation, if they were ever common, which does not appear to be true, are now exceedingly rare; so rare, indeed, that they are never heard of except in anonymous tracts, which are evidently concocted for the glory of God, rather than the edification of Man. Sceptics are at present numbered by thousands, and they can nearly always secure at their bedsides the presence of friends who share their unbelief. Every week the Freethought journals report quietly, and as a matter of course, the peaceful end of "infidels" who, having lived without hypocrisy, have died without fear. They are frequently buried by their heterodox friends, and never a week passes without the Secular Burial Service, or

some other appropriate words, being read by sceptics over a sceptic's grave.

Christian ministers know this. They usually confine themselves, therefore, to the death-bed stories of Paine and Voltaire, which have been again and again refuted. Little, if anything, is said about the eminent Freethinkers who have died in the present generation. The priests must wait half a century before they can hope to defame them with success. Our cry to these pious sutlers is "Hands off! Refute the arguments of Freethinkers, if you can; but do not obtrude your disgusting presence in the death-chamber, or vent your malignity over their tombs."

Suppose, however, that *every* Freethinker turned Christian on his death-bed. It is a tremendous stretch of fancy, but I make it for the sake of argument. What would it prove? Nothing, as I said before, but the force of our surroundings and early training. It is a common saying among Jews, when they hear of a Christian proselyte, "Ah, wait till he comes to die!" As a matter of fact, converted Jews generally die in the faith of their race; and the same is alleged as to the native converts that are made by our missionaries in India.

Heine has a pregnant passage on this point. Referring to Joseph Schelling, who was "an apostate to his own thought," who "deserted the altar he had himself consecrated," and "returned to the crypts of the past," Heine rebukes the "old believers" who cried *Kyrie eleison* in honor of such a conversion. "That," he says, "proves nothing for their doctrine. It only proves that man turns to religion when he is old and fatigued, when his physical and mental force has left him, when he can no longer enjoy nor reason. So many Freethinkers are converted on their death-beds! . . . But at least do not boast of them. These legendary conversions belong at best to pathology, and are a poor evidence for your cause. After all, they only prove this, that it was impossible for you to convert those Freethinkers while they were healthy in body and mind."[3]

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[3] *De L'Allemagne*, Vol. I., p. 174.

Rénan has some excellent words on the same subject in his delightful volume of autobiography. After expressing a rooted preference for a sudden death, he continues: "I should be grieved to go through one of those periods of feebleness, in which the man who has possessed strength and virtue is only the shadow and ruins of himself, and often, to the great joy of fools, occupies himself in demolishing the life he has laboriously built up. Such an old age is the worst gift the gods can bestow on man. If such a fate is reserved for me. I protest in advance against the fatuities that a softened brain may make me say or sign. It is Rénan sound in heart and head, such as I am now, and not Rénan half destroyed by death, and no longer himself, as I shall be if I decompose gradually, that I wish people to listen to and believe."[4]

To find the best passage on this topic in our own literature we must go back to the seventeenth century, and to Selden's *Table Talk*, a volume in which Coleridge found "more weighty bullion sense" than he "ever found in the same number of pages of any uninspired writer." Selden lived in a less mealy-mouthed age than ours, and what I am going to quote smacks of the blunt old times; but it is too good to miss, and all readers who are not prudish will thank me for citing it. "For a priest," says Selden, "to turn a man when he lies a dying, is just like one that hath a long time solicited a woman, and cannot obtain his end; at length he makes her drunk, and so lies with her." It is a curious thing that the writer of these words helped to draw up the Westminster Confession of Faith.

For my own part, while I have known many Freethinkers who were stedfast to their principles in death, I have never known a single case of recantation. The fact is, Christians are utterly mistaken on this subject. It is quite intelligible that those who believe in a vengeful God, and an everlasting hell, should tremble on "the brink of eternity;" and it is natural that they should ascribe to others the same trepidation. But a moment's reflection must convince them that this

[4] *Souvenirs D'Enfance et de Jeunesse*, p. 377.

is fallacious. The only terror in death is the apprehension of what lies beyond it, and that emotion is impossible to a sincere disbeliever. Of course the orthodox may ask "But *is* there a sincere disbeliever?" To which I can only reply, like Diderot, by asking "Is there a sincere Christian?"

Professor Tyndall, while repudiating Atheism himself, has borne testimony to the earnestness of others who embrace it. "I have known some of the most pronounced among them," he says, "not only in life but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a hangman's whip, with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in the discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended on their latest deeds."[5]

Lord Bacon said, "I do not believe that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death." True, and the physical suffering, and the pang of separation, are the same for all. Yet the end of life is as natural as its beginning, and the true philosophy of existence is nobly expressed in the lofty sentence of Spinoza, "A free man thinks less of nothing than of death."

> "So live, that when thy summons comes to join
> The innumerable caravan, which moves
> To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
> His chamber in the silent halls of death,
> Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
> Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."[6]

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[5] *Fortnightly Review*, November, 1877.
[6] Bryant, *Thanatopsis*.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

NEARLY five thousand copies of this little work having been sold in two years, I now publish a second edition, containing a considerable number of fresh names, which will be found marked with a star in the index. Scrupulous care has been taken, as before, to state nothing but facts, vouched for by irreproachable authorities.

LORD AMBERLEY.

Viscount Amberley, the eldest son of the late Earl Russell, and the author of a very heretical work entitled an *Analysis of Religious Belief*, lived and died a Freethinker. His will, stipulating that his son should be educated by a sceptical friend was set aside by Earl Russell; the law of England being such, that Freethinkers are denied the parental rights which are enjoyed by their Christian neighbors. Lady Frances Russell, who signs with her initials the Preface to Lord Amberley's book, which was published after his death, writes: "Ere the pages now given to the public had left the press, the hand that had written them was cold, the heart—of which few could know the loving depths—had ceased to beat, the far-ranging mind was for ever still, the fervent spirit was at rest. Let this be remembered by those who read, and add solemnity to the solemn purpose of the book."

JOHN BASKERVILLE.

Baskerville's name is well known in the republic of letters, and his memory still lingers in Birmingham, where he carried on the trade of a printer. He was celebrated for the excellence of his workmanship, the beauty of his types, and the splendor of his editions. Born in 1706, he died on January 8, 1775. He was buried in a tomb in his own garden, on which was placed the following inscription:

Stranger,
Beneath this cone, in unconsecrated ground,
A friend to the liberties of mankind directed
His body to be inurned.
May the example contribute to emancipate thy
Mind from the idle fears of Superstition
And the wicked arts of Priesthood.

This virtuous man and useful citizen took precautions against "the wicked arts of priesthood." "His will," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "professed open contempt for Christianity, and the biographers who reproduce the document always veil certain passages with lines of stars as being 'far too indecent (*i.e.* irreverent) for repetition.'" [7]

HENRI BAYLE.

Henri Bayle was the author of the famous Dictionary which bears his name. This monument of learning and acuteness has been of inestimable service to succeeding writers. Gibbon himself laid it under contribution, and acknowledged his indebtedness to the "celebrated writer" and "philosopher" of Amsterdam. Elsewhere Gibbon calls him "the indefatigable Bayle," an epithet which is singularly appropriate, since he worked fourteen hours daily for over forty years. Born on November 18, 1647, Bayle died on December 28, 1706. He continued writing to the very end, and "labored constantly, with the same tranquility of mind as if death had not been ready to interrupt his work." [8] This is the testimony of a friend, and a similar statement is made in the *Nouvelle Biographie Generale*, which says *Il mourut tout habillé, et pour ainsi dire la plume à la main*—"He died in his clothes, and as it were pen in hand." According to Des Maiseaux, "He saw death approaching without either fearing or desiring it." Nor did his jocularity desert him any more than his scepticism. Writing to Lord Shaftesbury on October 29, 1706—only two months before his death—he said: "I should have thought that a dispute with Divines would put me out of humor, but I find by experience that it serves as an amusement for me in the solitude to which I have reduced myself."

The final moments of this great scholar are described by a friend who had the account from an attendant. "M. Bayle died," says M. Seers, "with great tranquility, and without

[7] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

[8] Des Maiseaux, *Life of Bayle*, prefixed to the English translation of the "Dictionary."

anybody with him. At nine o'clock in the morning his landlady entered his chamber; he asked her, but with a dying voice, if his fire was kindled, and died a moment after, without M. Basnage[9], or me, or any of his friends with him."

JEREMY BENTHAM.

Bentham exercised a profound influence on the party of progress for nearly two generations. He was the father of Philosophical Radicalism, which did so much to free the minds and bodies of the English people, and which counted among its swordsmen historians like Grote, philosophers like Mill, wits like Sidney Smith, journalists like Fonblanque, and politicians like Roebuck. As a reformer in jurisprudence he has no equal. His brain swarmed with progressive ideas and projects for the improvement and elevation of mankind; and his fortune, as well as his intellect, was ever at the service of advanced causes. His scepticism was rather suggested than paraded in his multitudinous writings, but it was plainly expressed in a few special volumes. *Not Paul, But Jesus*, published under the pseudonym of Gamaliel Smith is a slashing attack on the Great Apostle. The *Church of England Catechism Explained* is a merciless criticism of that great instrument for producing mental and political slaves. But the most thorough-going of Bentham's works was a little volume written by Grote from the Master's notes — the *Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*—in which theology is assailed as the historic and necessary enemy of human liberty, enlightenment, and welfare.

Born on February 15, 1748, Bentham died on June 6, 1832. By a will dating as far back as 1769, his body was left for the purposes of science, "not out of affectation of singularity, but to the intent and with the desire that mankind may reap some small benfit in and by my decease, having hitherto had small opportunities to contribute thereto while living." A

[9] M. Basnage—the author of the first History of the Jews.

memorandum affixed shows that this clause was deliberately confirmed two months before his death.

Dr. Southwood Smith delivered a lecture over Bentham's remains, three days after his death, in the Webb Street School of Anatomy. He thus described the last moments of his illustrious friend :

"Some time before his death, when he firmly believed he was near that hour, he said to one of his disciples, who was watching over him :—'I now feel that I am dying : our care must be to minimise the pain. Do not let any of the servants come into my room, and keep away the youth : it will be distressing to them, and they can be of no service. Yet I must not be alone ; *you* will remain with me, and you only ; and then we shall have reduced the pain to the least possible amount.' Such were his last thoughts and feelings." [1]

Mr. Leslie Stephen relates a similar story in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. "During his last illness," says Mr. Stephen "he asked the doctor to tell him if there was any prospect of recovery. On being informed that there was none, he replied serenely "Very well, be it so ; then minimise pain." Bentham may have used the same language to the doctor and the disciple, and it was natural on his lips. As a Utilitarian, he regarded happiness as the only good and pain as the only evil. He met death "serenely," but like a sensible man he "minimised the pain."

PAUL BERT.

Paul Bert was born at Auxerre in October, 1833, and he died at Tonquin on November 11, 1886. His father educated him in a detestation of priests, and his own nature led him to the pursuit of science. After studying anatomy under Gratiolet, he took the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1863, and three years later the degree of Doctor of Science ; teaching zoology at Bordeaux and succeeding Flourens at the Museum. Going to Paris, he became preparator to the great anatomist Claude Bernard, whom he succeeded at the Sorbonne in 1869. His political life began with the fall of the

[1] Dr. Southwood Smith's *Lecture*, p. 62.

Empire. Gambetta appointed him prefect of the Nord, where he toiled mightily with General Faidherbe. After the war he entered the Chamber of Deputies, and devoted his great powers to the development of public education. Largely through his labors, the Chamber voted free, secular, and compulsory instruction for both sexes. He was idolised by the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in France. Being accused of a "blind hatred" of priests, he replied in the Chamber—"The conquests of education are made on the domain of religion; I am forced to meet on my road Catholic superstitions and Romish policy, or rather it is across their empire that my path seems to me naturally traced." Speaking at a mass meeting at the *Cirque d'Hiver*, in August, 1881, Gambetta himself being in the chair, Paul Bert declared that "modern societies march towards morality in proportion as they leave religion behind." Afterwards he published his scathing *Morale des Jesuites*, over twenty thousand copies of which were sold in less than a year. The book was dedicated to Bishop Freppel in a vein of masterly irony. Paul Bert also published a scientific work, the *Première Année d'Enseignement Scientifique*, which is almost universally used in the French primary schools.

During Gambetta's short-lived government Paul Bert held the post of Minister of Public Instruction. In 1886 he went out to Tonquin as Resident General. Hard work and the pestilential climate laid him low, and he succumbed to dysentery. A fortnight before his death he telegraphed to M. Freycinet, desiring him to say nothing of his illness for the sake of his friends and relatives. Some days later he telegraphed again, "You are right; it is better for me to die at my post than to quit Tonquin at the present moment." When the news of his death reached the French Chamber, M. Freycinet announced the event from the tribune.

"I announce with the deepest sorrow the death of M. Paul Bert. He died literally on the field of honor, broken down by the fatigues and hardships which he so bravely endured in trying to carry out the glorious task which he had undertaken. The Chamber loses by his death one of its most eminent members, Science one of its most illustrious votaries, France one of her most loving and faithful children, and the Government a fellow-worker

of inestimable value, in whom we placed the fullest confidence. Excuse me, gentlemen, if because my strength fails me I am unable to proceed."

The sitting was raised as a mark of respect, and the next day the Chamber voted a public funeral and a pension to Paul Bert's family. Bishop Freppel opposed the first vote on the ground that the deceased was an inveterate enemy of religion, but he was ignominiously beaten, the majority against him being 379 to 45. Despite this miserable protest, while Paul Bert's body was on its way to Europe the clerical party started a *canard* about his "conversion." Perhaps the story originated in the fact that he had daily visited the Haoni hospital, distributing books and medicines, and speaking kind words to the nuns in attendance. It was openly stated, and unctuously commented on in the religious journals, that the Resident General had sent for a Catholic bishop on his death-bed and taken the sacrament; and as inventions of this kind are always circumstantial, it was said that the Papal Nuncio at Lisbon had received this intelligence. But on December 29 the Papal Nuncio telegraphed that his name had been improperly used; and two days later, when the French war-ship touched at the Suez Canal, Madame Bert telegraphed that the story was absolutely and entirely false. Still, this pious effort to convert a corpse was not a complete failure. Some of the journals which published the "conversion" had not the honesty to publish the contradiction; and probably the death-bed repentence of Paul Bert will be devoutly believed by many religionists until they themselves cross "the bourne from whence no traveller returns," and have no further interest in lies or truth.

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, was born in 1672 at Battersea, where he also died on December 12, 1751. His life was a stormy one, and on the fall of the Tory ministry, of which he was a distinguished member, he was impeached by the Whig parliament under the leadership of Sir Robert

Walpole. It was merely a party prosecution, and although Bolingbroke was attainted of high treason, he did not lose a friend or forfeit the respect of honest men. Swift and Pope held him in the highest esteem; they corresponded with him throughout their lives, and it was from Bolingbroke that Pope derived the principles of the *Essay on Man.* That Bolingbroke's abilities were of the highest order cannot be gainsaid. His political writings are masterpieces of learning, eloquence, and wit, the style is sinewy and graceful, and in the greatest heat of controversy he never ceases to be a gentleman. His philosophical writings were published after his death by his literary executor, David Mallett, whom Johnson described as "a beggarly Scotchman," who was "left half-a-crown" to fire off a blunderbuss, which his patron had charged, against "religion and morality." Johnson's opinion on such a subject is, however, of trifling importance. He hated Scotchmen and Infidels, and he told Boswell that Voltaire and Rousseau deserved transportation more than any of the scoundrels who were tried at the Old Bailey.

Bolingbroke's philosophical writings show him to have been a Deist. He believed in God but he rejected Revelation. His views are advanced and supported with erudition, eloquence, and masterly irony. The approach of death, which was preceded by the excruciating disease of cancer in the cheek, did not produce the least change in his convictions. According to Goldsmith, "He was consonant with himself to the last; and those principles which he had all along avowed, he confirmed with his dying breath, having given orders that none of the clergy should be permitted to trouble him in his last moments."[2]

FRANCIS BROUSSAIS.

Francis Jean Victor Broussais, the great French physician and philosopher, was born in 1772. He died on November 17, 1838, leaving behind him a "profession of faith," which was

[2] *Life of Lord Bolingbroke;* Works, Vol. IV., p. 248. Edition: Tegg, 1835.

published by his biographer. With respect to immortality, he wrote, "I have no fears or hopes as to future life, since I am unable to conceive it." His views on the God idea were equally negative. "I cannot," he said, "form any notion of such a power."[3]

GIORDANO BRUNO.

This glorious martyr of Freethought did not die in a quiet chamber, tended by loving hands. He was literally "butchered to make a Roman holiday." When the assassins of "the bloody faith" kindled the fire which burnt out his splendid life, he was no decrepit man, nor had the finger of Death touched his cheek with a pallid hue. The blood coursed actively through his veins, and a dauntless spirit shone in his noble eyes. It might have been Bruno that Shelley had in mind when he wrote those thrilling lines in *Queen Mab:*

> "I was an infant when my mother went
> To see an Atheist burned. She took me there:
> The dark-robed priests were met around the pile,
> The multitude was gazing silently;
> And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,
> Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
> Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth:
> The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs;
> His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon;
> His death-pang rent my heart! The insensate mob
> Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept."

Giordano Bruno was born at Nola, near Naples, in 1548, ten years after the death of Copernicus, and ten years before the birth of Bacon. At the age of fifteen he became a novice in the monastery of San Domenico Maggiore, and after his year's novitiate expired he took the monastic vows. Studying deeply, he became heretical, and an act of accusation was drawn up against the boy of sixteen. Eight years later he was threatened with another trial for heresy. A third pro-

[3] H. de Montêgre, *Notice Historique sur la Vie, les Travaux, etc., of F. Broussais.* Paris, 1839.

cess was more to be dreaded, and in his twenty-eighth year Bruno fled from his persecutors. He visited Rome, Noli, Venice, Turin and Padua. At Milan he made the acquaintance of Sir Philip Sidney. After teaching for some time in the university, he went to Chambery, but the ignorance and bigotry of its monks were too great for his patience. He next visited Geneva, but although John Calvin was dead, his dark spirit still remained, and only flight preserved Bruno from the fate of Servetus. Through Lyons he passed to Toulouse, where he was elected Public Lecturer to the University. In 1579 he went to Paris. The streets were still foul with the blood of the Bartholomew massacres, but Bruno declined a professorship at the Sorbonne, a condition of which was attending mass. Henry the Third, however, made him Lecturer extraordinary to the University. Paris at length became too hot to hold him, and he went to London, where he lodged with the French Ambassador. His evenings were mostly spent with Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Grevile, Dyer, and Hervey. So great was his fame that he was invited to read at the University of Oxford, where he also held a public debate with its orthodox professors on the Copernican astronomy. Leaving London in 1584, he returned to Paris, and there also he publicly disputed with the Sorbonne. His safety being once more threatened, he went to Marburg, and thence to Wittenburg, where he taught for two years. At Helenstadt he was excommunicated by Boëtius. Repairing to Frankfort, he made the acquaintance of a nobleman, who lured him to Venice and betrayed him to the Inquisition. The Venetian Council transferred him to Rome, where he languished for seven years in a pestiferous dungeon, and was repeatedly tortured, according to the hellish code of the Inquisition. At length, on February 10, 1600, he was led out to the church of Santa Maria, and sentenced to be burnt alive, or, as the Holy Church hypocritically phrased it, to be punished "as mercifully as possible, and without effusion of blood." Haughtily rasing his head, he exclaimed: "You are more afraid to pronounce my sentence than I to receive it." He was allowed a week's grace for recantation, but without avail; and on the 17th of February, 1600, he was burnt to death

on the Field of Flowers. To the last he was brave and defiant; he contemptuously pushed aside the crucifix they presented him to kiss; and, as one of his enemies said, he died without a plaint or a groan.

Such heroism stirs the blood more than the sound of a trumpet. Bruno stood at the stake in solitary and awful grandeur. There was not a friendly face in the vast crowd around him. It was one man against the world. Surely the knight of Liberty, the champion of Freethought, who lived such a life and died such a death, without hope of reward on earth or in heaven, sustained only by his indomitable manhood, is worthy to be accounted the supreme martyr of all time. He towers above the less disinterested martyrs of Faith like a colossus; the proudest of them might walk under him without bending.

Authorities:
M. Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno, 2 vols.*
Frith, I., *Life of Giordano Bruno.*

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE.

The author of the famous *History of Civilisation* believed in God and immortality, but he rejected all the special tenets of Christianity. He died at Damascus on May 29, 1862. His incoherent utterences in the fever that carried him off showed that his mind was still dwelling on the uncompleted purpose of his life. "Oh, my book," he exclaimed, "my book, I shall never finish my book!"[4] His end, however, was quite peaceful. His biographer says: "He had a very quiet night, with intervals of consciousness; but at six in the morning a sudden and very marked change for the worse became but too fearfully evident; and at a quarter past ten he quietly breathed his last, with merely a wave of the hand."[5]

[4] *Pilgrim Memories*, by J. Stuart Glennie, p. 508.
[5] *Life and Writings of Henry Thomas Buckle*, by A. Huth: Vol. II., p. 252.

LORD BYRON.

No one can read Byron's poems attentively without seeing that he was not a Christian, and this view is amply corroborated by his private letters, notably the very explicit one to Hodgson, which has only recently been published. Even the poet's first and chief biographer, Moore, was constrained to admit that "Lord Byron was, to the last, a sceptic."

Byron was born at Holles Street, London, on January 22, 1788. His life was remarkably eventful for a poet, but its history is so easily accessible, and so well known, that we need not summarise it here. His death occurred at Missolonghi on April 19, 1824. Greece was then struggling for independence, and Byron devoted his life and fortune to her cause. His sentiments on this subject are expressed with power and dignity in the lines written at Missolonghi on his thirty-sixth birthday. The faults of his life were many, but they were redeemed by the glory of his death.

Exposure, which his declining health was unfitted to bear, brought on a fever, and the soldier-poet of freedom died without proper attendance, far from those he loved. He conversed a good deal at first with his friend Parry, who records that "he spoke of death with great composure." The day before he expired, when his friends and attendants wept round his bed at the thought of losing him, he looked at one of them steadily, and said, half smiling, "Oh questa è una bella scena!"—Oh what a fine scene! After a fit of delirium, he called his faithful servant Fletcher, who offered to bring pen and paper to take down his words. "Oh no," he replied "there is no time. Go to my sister—tell her—go to Lady Byron—you will see her and say——." Here his voice became indistinct. For nearly twenty minutes he muttered to himself, but only a word now and then could be distinguished. He then said, "Now, I have told you all." Fletcher replied that he had not understood a word. "Not understand me?" exclaimed Bryon, with a look of the utmost distress, "what a pity!—then it is too late; all is over." He tried to utter a few more words, but none were intelligible except "my sister—my child." After the doctors had given him a

sleeping draught, he muttered "Poor Greece!—poor town —my poor servants!—my hour is come!—I do not care for death—but why did I not go home?—There are things that make the world dear to me: for the rest I am content to die." He spoke also of Greece, saying, "I have given her my time, my means, my health—and now I give her my life! what could I do more?" About six o'clock in the evening he said: "Now I shall go to sleep." He then fell into the slumber from which he never woke. At a quarter past six on the following day, he opened his eyes and immediately shut them again. The physicians felt his pulse—he was dead.[6]

His work was done. As Mr. Swinburne wrote in 1865, "A little space was allowed him to show at least an heroic purpose, and attest a high design; then, with all things unfinished before him and behind, he fell asleep after many troubles and triumphs. Few can have ever gone wearier to the grave: none with less fear."[7] The pious guardians of Westminster Abbey denied him sepulture in its holy precincts but he found a grave at Hucknall, and "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

Byron's own views on the subject of death-beds were expressed in a letter to Murray, dated June 7, 1820. "A death-bed," he wrote, "is a matter of nerves and constitution, not of religion." He also remarked that "Men died calmly before the Christian era, and since, without Christianity."

RICHARD CARLILE.

Richard Carlile was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire, on December 8, 1790. His whole life was spent in advocating Freethought and Republicanism, and in resisting the Blasphemy Laws. His total imprisonments for the freedom of the press amounted to nine years and four months. Thirteen days before his death he penned these words: "The enemy

[6] *Byron's Life and Letters*, by Thomas Moore, pp. 684—688.
[7] Preface (p. 28) to a Selection from Byron's poems, 1865.

with whom I have to grapple is one with whom no peace can be made. Idolatry will not parley; superstition will not treat on covenant. They must be uprooted for public and individual safety." Carlile died on February 10, 1843. He was attended in his last illness by Dr. Thomas Lawrence, the author of the once famous Lectures on Man. Wishing to be useful in death as in life, Carlile devoted his body to dissection. His wish was complied with by the family, and the post-mortem examination was recorded in the *Lancet*. The burial took place at Kensal Green Cemetery, where a clergyman insisted on reading the Church Service over his remains. "His eldest son Richard," says Mr. Holyoake, "who represented his sentiments as well as his name, very properly protested against the proceedings, as an outrage upon the principles of his father and the wishes of the family. Of course the remonstrance was disregarded, and Richard, his brothers, and their friends, left the ground."[8] After their departure, the clergyman called the great hater of priests his "dear departed brother," and declared that the rank Materialist had died "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection."

WILLIAM KINGDON CLIFFORD.

Professor Clifford died all too early of consumption on March 3, 1879. He was one of the gentlest and most amiable of men, and the centre of a large circle of distinguished friends. His great ability was beyond dispute; in the higher mathematics he enjoyed a European reputation. Nor was his courage less, for he never concealed his heresy, but rather proclaimed it from the housetops. A Freethinker to the heart's core, he "utterly dismissed from his thoughts, as being unprofitable or worse, all speculations on a future or unseen world"; and "as never man loved life more, so never man feared death less." He fulfilled, continues Mr. Pollock, "well and truly the great saying of Spinoza, often in his

[8] *Life and Character of Richard Carlile*, by G. J. Holyoake.

mind and on his lips: *Homo liber de nulla re minus quam de morte cogitat*, [A free man thinks less of nothing than of death.]"[9] Clifford faced the inevitable with the utmost calmness.

"For a week he had known that it might come at any moment, and looked to it stedfastly. So calmly had he received the warning which conveyed this knowledge that it seemed at the instant as if he did not understand it. . . . He gave careful and exact directions as to the disposal of his works. . . . More than this, his interest in the outer world, his affection for his friends and his pleasure in their pleasures, did not desert him to the very last. He still followed the course of events, and asked for public news on the morning of his death, so strongly did he hold fast his part in the common weal and in active social life."[1]

Clifford was a great loss to the "good old cause." He was a most valiant soldier of progress, cut off before a tithe of his work was accomplished.

ANACHARSIS CLOOTZ.

Among the multitude of figures in the vast panorama of the French Revolution was Anacharsis Clootz. He appears several times in Carlyle's great epic. Now he introduces a deputation of foreigners of all nations to the Assembly. Later he presents to the Convention "a work evincing the nullity of all religions." Finally, on March 24, 1794, he is one of a tumbril-load of victims, nineteen in all, on the road to the guillotine. "Clootz," says Carlyle, "still with an air of polished sarcasm, endeavors to jest, to offer cheering 'arguments of Materialism'; he requested to be executed last, 'in order to establish certain principles.'"[2] Clootz's biographer, Avenel, gives a fuller account of the scene "Let me lie under the green sward," exclaimed the doomed Atheist, "so that I may be re-born in vegetation." "Nature,"

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[9] *Lectures and Essays*, by Professor Clifford. Pollock's Introduction, p. 25.

[1] Ibid, p. 26.

[2] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Vol. III., p. 215.

he said, "is a good mother, who loves to see her children appear and re-appear in different forms. All she includes is eternal, imperishable like herself. Now let me sleep!"[3]

ANTHONY COLLINS.

Anthony Collins was one of the chief English Freethinkers of the eighteenth century. Professor Fraser calls him "this remarkable man,"[4] Swift refers to him as a leading sceptic of that age. He was a barrister, born of a good Essex family in 1676, and dying on Dec. 13, 1729. Locke, whose own character was manly and simple, was charmed by him. "He praised his love of truth and moral courage," says Professor Fraser, "as superior to almost any other he had ever known, and by his will he made him one of his executors."[5] Yet bigotry was then so rampant, that Bishop Berkeley, who, according to Pope, had every virtue under heaven, actually said in the *Guardian* that the author of *A Discourse on Freethinking* "deserved to be denied the common benefits of air and water." Collins afterwards engaged in controversy with the clergy, wrote against priestcraft, and debated with Dr. Samuel Clarke "about necessity and the moral nature of man, stating the arguments against human freedom with a logical force unsurpassed by any necessitarian."[6] With respect to Collins's controversy on "the soul," Professor Huxley says: "I do not think anyone can read the letters which passed between Clarke and Collins without admitting that Collins, who writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning, has by far the best of the argument, so far as the possible materiality of the soul goes; and that in this battle the Goliath of Freethinking overcame the champion of what was considered orthodoxy."[7] According to Berkeley, Collins had announced "that he was able to demonstrate the impossibility of God's existence," but this is probably the

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[3] Georges Avenel, *Anacharsis Clootz*, Vol. II., p. 471. Paris, 1865.
[4] *Berkeley*, by A. C. Fraser, LL.D., p. 99. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.
[7] *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 324.

exaggeration of an opponent. We may be sure, however, that he was a very thorough sceptic with regard to Christianity. His death is thus referred to in the *Biographia Britannica* :—

"Notwithstanding all the reproaches cast upon Mr. Collins as an enemy to religion, impartiality obliges us to remark, what is said, and generally believed to be true, upon his death-bed he declared 'That, as he had always endeavored, to the best of his abilities to serve his God, his king, and his country, so he was persuaded he was going to the place which God had designed for those who love him': to which he added that '*The Catholic religion is to love God, and to love man*'; and he advised such as were about him to have a constant regard to these principles."

There is probably a good deal apocryphal in this passage, but it is worthy of notice that nothing is said about any dread of death. Another memorable fact is that Collins left his library to an opponent, Dr. Sykes. It was large and curious, and always open to men of letters. Collins was so earnest a seeker for truth, and so candid a controversialist, that he often furnished his antagonists with books to confute himself.

AUGUSTE COMTE.

Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism, was born on January 19, 1798. The aim of his philosophy, as set forth on the title-page of his masterpiece, was to "reorganise society, without God or king, by the systematic cultus of Humanity." Owing to a congenital disorder of the nervous system, he was liable to occasional aberrations of mind, and he was once put under restraint. But his life was nevertheless dignified and fruitful, and the literature of social, political and religious speculation shows what a profound influence he has exercised on many of the best minds of our age.

Comte died on September 5, 1857, of the painful disease of cancer in the stomach. M. Littré, his greatest disciple, thus describes his last days :—"The fatal hour arrived. M. Comte, who had borne his malady with the greatest fortitude, met with no less firmness the approach of death. His bodily

weakness became extreme, and he expired without pain having around him some of his most cherished disciples."[8]

CONDORCET.

Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicholas, Marquis de Condorcet, was born at Ribemont in Picardy, in 1743. As early as 1764 he composed a work on the integral calculus. In 1773 he was appointed perpetual secretary to the French Academy. He was an intense admirer of Voltaire, and wrote a life of that great man. At the commencement of the Revolution he ardently embraced the popular cause. In 1791 he represented Paris in the Legislative Assembly, of which he was immediately elected secretary. It was on his motion that, in the following year, all orders of nobility were abolished. Elected by the Aisne department to the new Assembly of 1792, he was named a member of the Constitutional Committee, which also included Danton and Thomas Paine. After the execution of Louis XVI., he was opposed to the excesses of the extreme party. Always showing the courage of his convictions, he soon became the victim of proscription. "He cared as little for his life," says Mr. Morley, "as Danton or St. Just cared for theirs. Instead of coming down among the men of the Plain or the frogs of the Marsh, he withstood the Mountain to its face." While hiding from those who thirsted for his blood, and burdened with anxiety as to the fate of his wife and child, he wrote, without a single book to refer to, his novel and profound *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progès de l'Esprit Humain*. Mr. Morley says that "Among the many wonders of an epoch of portents this feat of intellectual abstraction is not the least amazing." Despite the odious law that whoever gave refuge to a proscribed person should suffer death, Condorcet was offered shelter by a noble-hearted woman, who said "If you are outside the law, we are not outside humanity." But he would not bring peril upon her

[8] E. Littré, *Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive*, p. 643.

house, and he went forth to his doom. Arrested at Clamart-sous-Meudon, he was conducted to prison at Bourg-la-Reine. Wounded in the foot, and exhausted with fatigue and privation, he was flung into a miserable cell. It was the 27th of March, 1794. "On the morrow," says Mr. Morley, "when the gaolers came to see him, they found him stretched upon the ground, dead and stark. So he perished—of hunger and weariness, say some; of poison ever carried by him in a ring, say others."[9] The Abbé Morellet, in his narrative of the death of Condorcet (*Memoires*, ch. xxiv.), says that the poison was a mixture of stramonium and opium, but he adds that the surgeon described the death as due to apoplexy. In any case Condorcet died like a hero, refusing to save his life at the cost of another's danger.

ROBERT COOPER.

Robert Cooper was secretary to Robert Owen and editor of the London *Investigator*. His lectures on the Bible and the Immortality of the Soul still enjoy a regular sale, as well as his *Holy Scriptures Analysed*. He was a thorough-going Materialist, and he never wavered in this philosophy. He died on May 3, 1868. The *National Reformer* of July 26, 1868, contains a note written by Cooper shortly before his death.

"At a moment when the hand of death is suspended over me, my theological opinions remain unchanged; months of deep and silent cogitation, under the pressure of long suffering, have confirmed rather than modified them. I calmly await, therefore, all risk attached to these convictions. Conscious that, if mistaken, I have always been sincere, I apprehend no disabilities for impressions I cannot resist."

It may be added that Robert Cooper was no relation to Thomas Cooper.

D'ALEMBERT.

D'Alembert, the founder of the great *Encylopœdia*, the friend of Voltaire and the colleague of Diderot, was born on

[9] *Miscellanies*. By John Morley. Vol. I., p. 75.

November 16, 1717. His death occurred on October 29, 1783. His opinions on religion were those of a firm Agnostic. "As for the existence of a supreme intelligence," he wrote to Frederick the Great, "I think that those who deny it advance far more than they can prove, and scepticism is the only reasonable course." He goes on to say, however, that experience invincibly proves the materiality of the "soul."[1] D'Alembert's last moments were in harmony with his philosophy. According to his friend and executor, Condorcet, his last days were spent amidst a numerous company, listening to their conversation, and sometimes enlivening it with pleasantries or stories. "He only," says Condorcet, "was able to think of other subjects than himself, and to give himself to gaiety and amusement."[2]

DANTON.

Danton, called by Carlyle the Titan of the Revolution, and certainly its greatest figure after Mirabeau, was guillotined on April 5, 1794. He was only thirty-five, but he had made a name that will live as long as the history of France. With all his faults, says Carlyle, "he was a Man; fiery-real, from the great fire-bosom of Nature herself." Some of his phrases are like pyramids, standing sublime above the drifting sand of human speech. It was he who advised "daring, and still daring, and ever daring." It was he who cried "The coalesced kings of Europe threaten us, and as our gage of battle we fling before them the head of a king." It was he who exclaimed, in a rapture of patriotism, "Let my name be blighted, so that France be free." And what a saying was that, when his friends urged him to flee from the Terror, "One does not carry his country with him at the sole of his shoe!"

Danton would not flee. "They dare not" arrest him, he said; but he was soon a prisoner in the Luxembourg. "What

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[1] J. Morley, *Diderot*, Vol. II., p. 160.

[2] *Œuvres Philosophique de D'Alembert*, Vol. I., p. 131. An. XIII. (1805).

is your name and abode?" they asked him at the tribunal. "My name is Danton," he answered, "a name tolerably known in the Revolution: my abode will soon be Annihilation; but I shall live in the Pantheon of History." Replying to his infamous Indictment, his magnificent voice "reverberates with the roar of a lion in the toils." The President rings his bell, enjoining calmness, says Carlyle, in a vehement manner. "What is it to thee how I defend myself?" cries Danton; "the right of *dooming* me is thine always. The voice of a man speaking for his honor and life may well drown the jingling of thy bell!"

Under sentence of death he preserved, as Jules Claretie says, that virile energy and superb sarcasm which were the basis of his character. Fabre d'Eglantine being disquieted about his unfinished comedy, Danton exclaimed "Des vers! Des vers! Dans huit jours tu en feras plus que tu ne voudras!" Then he added nobly, "We have finished our task, let us sleep." Thus the time passed in prison.

On the way to the guillotine Danton bore himself proudly. Poor Camille Desmoulins struggled and writhed in the cart, which was surrounded by a howling mob. "Calm, my friend," said Danton, "heed not that vile canaille." Herault de Séchelles, whose turn it was to die first, tried to embrace his friend, but the executioners prevented him. "Fools," said Danton, "you cannot prevent our heads from meeting in the basket." At the foot of the scaffold the thought of home flashed through his mind. "O my wife," he exclaimed, "my well-beloved, I shall never see thee more then!" But recovering himself, he said "Danton, no weakness!" Looking the executioner in the face, he cried with his great voice, "You will show my head to the crowd; it is worth showing; you don't see the like in these days." The next minute that head, the one that might have guided France best, was severed from his body by the knife of the guillotine. What a man that Danton was! With his Herculean form, his huge black head, his mighty voice, his passionate nature, his fiery courage, his strong sense, his poignant wit, his geniality, and his freedom from cant, he was a splendid and unique figure. An Atheist, he perished in trying to arrest bloodshed. Robes-

piere, the Deist, continued the bloodshed till it drowned him. The two men were as diverse in nature as in creed, and Danton killed by Robespierre, as Courtois said, was Pyrrhus killed by a woman!

[The reader may consult Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Book vi. ch. ii.; and Jules Claretie's *Camille Desmoulins et les Dantonistes* ch. vi.]

CHARLES DARWIN.

Charles Darwin, the great Evolutionist, whose fame is as wide as civilisation, was born at Shrewsbury on February 12, 1809. Intended for a clergyman, he became a naturalist; and although his bump of reverence was said to be large enough for ten priests, he passed by gentle stages into the most extreme scepticism. From the age of forty he was, to use his own words, a complete disbeliever in Christianity. Further reflection showed him that nature bore no evidences of design, and the prevalence of struggle and suffering in the world compelled him to reject the doctrine of infinite benevolence. He professed himself an Agnostic, regarding the problem of the universe as beyond our solution. "For myself," he wrote, "I do not believe in any revelation. As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities."[3] Yet the Church buried him in Westminster Abbey "in the *sure and certain* hope of a *glorious resurrection*."

Darwin died on April 19, 1882, in the plenitude of his fame, having outlived the opposition of ignorance and bigotry, and witnessed the triumph of his ideas. His last moments are described by his eldest son Francis:

"No especial change occurred during the beginning of April, but on Saturday 15th he was seized with giddiness while sitting at dinner in the evening, and fainted in an attempt to reach his sofa. On the 17th he was again better, and in my temporary absence recorded for me the progress of an experiment in which I was engaged. During the night of April 18th, about a quarter to twelve, he had a severe attack and passed into a faint, from

[3] *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Vol. I., p. 307.

which he was brought back to consciousness with great difficulty. He seemed to recognise the approach of death, and said, '*I am not the least afraid to die.*' All the next morning he suffered from terrible nausea and faintness, and hardly rallied before the end came. He died about four o'clock on Wednesday, April 19, 1882.[4]

No one in his senses would have supposed that he *was* "afraid to die," yet it is well to have the words recorded by the son who was present. Pious ingenuity will be unable to traduce the death-bed of Charles Darwin.

ERASMUS DARWIN.

Erasmus Darwin, the physician, and grandfather of the great Charles Darwin, was born on December 12, 1731. His death took place on April 10, 1802. While driving from patient to patient, Erasmus Darwin composed a lengthy poem, in which he anticipated many of the ideas of modern evolution. His scepticism was strongly pronounced. He believed in God, but not in Christianity. Even the Unitarians were too orthodox for him; indeed, he called Unitarianism a feather bed to catch a falling Christian. His death was singularly peaceful. "At about seven o'clock," says his grandson, "he was seized with a violent shivering fit, and went into the kitchen to warm himself; he retired to his study, lay on the sofa, became faint and cold, and was moved into an arm chair, where, without pain or emotion of any kind, he expired a little before nine o'clock."[5] A few years before, writing to a friend, he said, "When I think of dying it is always without pain or fear."

DELAMBRE.

Jean Baptist Joseph Delambre, one of the most distinguished French astronomers, was born at Amiens on September 19, 1749. He was a pupil of Lalande, and like him an Atheist. He died, after a long and painful illness, on August

[4] Vol. III., p. 358.
[5] Charles Darwin, *Life of Erasmus Darwin*, p. 126.

18, 1822. In announcing his death, a pious journal wrote: "It appears that this *savant* had the misfortune to be an unbeliever. A disciple of Lalande, he had inherited from him, if not his enthusiastic Atheism, at least an entire alienation from religion. We wish we could announce that sickness had brought him back to the faith; but we have been unable to obtain any information to that effect."[6] Like Lalande, the dying astronomer was faithful to the convictions of his life.

DENIS DIDEROT.

Rarely has the world seen a more fecund mind than Diderot's. Voltaire called him *Pantophile*, for everything came within the sphere of his mental activity. The twenty volumes of his collected writings contain the germ-ideas of nearly all the best thought of our age, and his anticipations of Darwinism are nothing less than extraordinary. He had not Voltaire's lightning wit and supreme grace of style, nor Rousseau's passionate and subtle eloquence; but he was superior to either of them in depth and solidity, and he was surprisingly ahead of his time, not simply in his treatment of religion, but also in his view of social and political problems. His historical monument is the great *Encyclopœdia*. For twenty years he labored on this colossal enterprise, assisted by the best heads in France, but harassed and thwarted by the government and the clergy. The work is out of date now, but it inaugurated an era; in Mr. Morley's words, "it rallied all that was then best in France round the standard of light and social hope." Diderot tasted imprisonment in 1749, and many times afterwards his liberty was menaced. Nothing, however, could intimidate or divert him from his task; and he never quailed when the ferocious beast of persecution, having tasted the blood of meaner victims, turned an evil and ravenous eye on him.

Carlyle's brilliant essay on Diderot is ludicrously unjust. The Scotch puritan was quite unable to judge the French

[6] *L'Ami de la Religion et du Roi*, tome xxxiii., p. 111.

atheist. A greater than Carlyle wrote: "Diderot is Diderot, a peculiar individuality; whoever holds him or his doings cheaply is a Philistine, and the name of them is legion." Goethe's dictum outweighs that of his disciple.

Diderot's character, no less than his genius, was misunderstood by Carlyle. His materialism and atheism were intolerable to a Calvinist steeped in pantheism; and his freedom of life, which might be pardoned or excused in a Scotch poet, was disgusting in a French philosopher. Let not the reader be biased by Carlyle's splenetic utterances on Diderot, but turn to more sympathetic and impartial judges.

Born at Langres in 1713, Diderot died at Paris 1784. His life was long, active, and fruitful. His personal appearance is described by Mr. Morley:—"His admirers declared his head to be the ideal head of an Aristotle or a Plato. His brow was wide, lofty, open, gently rounded. The arch of the eyebrow was full of delicacy; the nose of masculine beauty; the habitual expression of the eyes kindly and sympathetic; but as he grew heated in talk they sparkled like fire; the curves of the mouth bespoke an interesting mixture of finesse, grace, and geniality. His bearing was nonchalant enough, but there was naturally in the carriage of the head, especially when he talked with action, much dignity, energy, and nobleness." [7]

His conversational powers were great, and showed the fertility of his genius. "When I recall Diderot," wrote Meister, "the immense variety of his ideas, the amazing multiplicity of his knowledge, the rapid flight, the warmth, the impetuous tumult of his imagination, all the charm and all the disorder of his conversation, I venture to liken his character to nature herself, exactly as he used to conceive her—rich, fertile, abounding in germs of every sort, gentle and fierce, simple and majestic, worthy and sublime, but without any dominating principle, without a master and without a God."

Diderot was recklessly prodigal of his ideas, flinging them without hesitation or reticence among his friends. He was

[7] *Diderot and the Encyclopœdists*, by John Morley, Vol. I., pp. 39-40.

equally generous in other respects, and friendship was of the essence of his life. "He," wrote Marmontel in his Memoirs, "he who was one of the most enlightened men of the century, was also one of the most amiable; and in everything that touched moral goodness, when he spoke of it freely, I cannot express the charm of his eloquence. His whole soul was in his eyes and on his lips; never did a countenance better depict the goodness of the heart."

Chequered as Diderot's life had been, his closing years were full of peace and comfort. Superstition was mortally wounded, the Church was terrified, and it was clear that the change the philosophers had worked for was at hand. As Mr. Morley says, "the press literally teemed with pamphlets, treatises, poems, histories, all shouting from the house-tops open destruction to beliefs which fifty years before were actively protected against so much as a whisper in the closet. Every form of literary art was seized and turned into an instrument in the remorseless attack on *L'Infâme*." Diderot rejoiced at all this, as largely the fruit of his own labors. He was held in general esteem by the party of progress throughout Europe. Catherine the Great's generosity secured him a steady income, which he had never derived from his literary labors. His townsmen of Langres placed his bust among the worthies in the town hall. More than a hundred years later a national statue of Diderot was unveiled at his native place, and the balance of subscriptions was devoted to publishing a popular selection of his works. Truly did this great Atheist say, looking forward to the atoning future, "Posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the devout."

In the spring of 1784 Diderot was attacked by what he felt was his last illness. Dropsy set in, and in a few months the end came. A fortnight before his death he was removed from the upper floor in the Rue Taranne, which he had occupied for thirty years, to palatial rooms provided for him by the Czarina in the Rue de Richelieu. Growing weaker every day he was still alert in mind.

"He did all he could to cheer the people around him, and amused himself and them by arranging his pictures and his books.

In the evening, to the last, he found strength to converse on science and philosophy to the friends who were eager as ever for the last gleanings of his prolific intellect. In the last conversation that his daughter heard him carry on, his last words were the pregnant aphorism that *the first step towards philosophy is incredulity.*

"On the evening of the 30th of July, 1784 he sat down to table, and at the end of the meal took an apricot. His wife, with kind solicitude, remonstrated. *Mais quel diable de mal veux-tu que cela me fasse?* [How the deuce can that hurt me?] he said, and ate the apricot. Then he rested his elbow on the table, trifling with some sweetmeats. His wife asked him a question; on receiving no answer, she looked up and saw that he was dead. He had died as the Greek poets say that men died in the golden age—*they passed away as if mastered by sleep.*" [8]

Grimm gives a slightly different account of Diderot's death, ommitting the apricot, and stating that his words to his wife were, "It is long since I have eaten with so much relish."[9] With respect to the funeral, Grimm says that the curé of St. Roch, in whose parish he died, had scrupled at first about burying him, on account of his sceptical reputation and the doctrines expounded in his writings; but the priest's scruples were overcome, partly by a present of "fifteen or eighteen thousand livres."

According to Mr. Morley, an effort was made to convert Diderot, or at least to wring from him something like a retractation.

"The priest of St. Sulpice, the centre of the philosophic quarter, came to visit him three or four times a week, hoping to achieve at least the semblance of a conversion. Diderot did not encourage conversation on theology, but when pressed he did not refuse it. One day when they found, as two men of sense will always find, that they had ample common ground in matters of morality and good works, the priest ventured to hint that an exposition of such excellent maxims, accompanied by a slight retraction of Diderot's previous works, would have a good effect on the world. 'I dare say it would, monsieur le curé, but confess that I should be acting an impudent lie.' And no word of retractation was ever made." [1]

If judging men by the company they keep is a safe rule, we need have no doubt as to the sentiments which Diderot entertained to the end. Grimm tells us that on the morning of the

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[8] Morley, Vol. II., pp. 259, 260.

[9] Quoted from the *Revue Retrospective* in Assézat's complete edition of Diderot.

[1] Morley, Vol. II., p. 258.

very day he died "he conversed for a long time and with the greatest freedom with his friend the Baron D'Holbach," the famous author of the *System of Nature*, compared with whom, says Mr. Morley, "the most eager Nescient or Denier to be found in the ranks of the assailants of theology in our own day is timorous and moderate." These men were the two most earnest Atheists of their generation. Both were genial, benevolent, and conspicuously generous. D'Holbach was learned, eloquent, and trenchant; and Diderot, in Comte's opinion, was the greatest genius of the eighteenth century.

ETIENNE DOLET.

Etienne (Stephen) Dolet, the great French printer, whose name is inseparably connected with the Revival of Learning, was hanged and burnt at Lyons on August 3, 1546. The Church gave him the martyr's crown on his thirty-seventh birthday. He was a heretic, and he paid the penalty exacted from all who dared to think for themselves. As Mr. Christie remarks, he was "neither a Protestant nor a Catholic." His contemporaries were fully persuaded of his Atheism "Philosophy has alone the right," says the great French historian, "to claim on its side the illustrious victim of the Place Maubert."[2]

Dolet got his first taste of persecution in 1533, when he was thrown into prison for denouncing in a Latin oration the burning alive of Jean de Cartuce at Toulouse. During the remaining thirteen years of his life he was five times imprisoned, and nearly half his days were spent in confinement.

Sentence of death for blasphemy was pronounced on Dolet in the *Chambre Ardente* at Paris on August 2, 1546. He was condemned to be hung, and then burnt with his books on the Place Maubert; and his widow and children were beggared by the confiscation of his goods to the king. It was also ordered that he should be put to the torture before his execution, and questioned about his companions; and "if the

[2] Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, Vol. III., p. 343.

said Dolet shall cause any scandal or utter any blasphemy, his tongue shall be cut out, and he shall be burnt alive." The next day he met his doom. He was hung first, and then (for they were not very particular), probably while he still breathed, the faggots were lighted, and Dolet and his books were consumed in the flames. It is said that instead of a prayer he uttered a pun in Latin—*Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba dolet*—Dolet himself does not grieve, but the pious crowd grieves. Yet the confessor who attended him at the stake invented the miserable falsehood that the martyr had acknowledged his errors. "I do not believe a word of it," wrote the great Erasmus, "it is the usual story which these people invent after the death of their victims." Dolet's real sentiments are expressed in the noble *cantique*, full of resignation and courage, which he composed in prison when death was imminent.[3] He perished like a hero, as became the friend of Desperiers, of Marot, and of Rabelais; and his death, no less than his life, inspires M. Boulmier to call him "the Christ of Freethought."

Authorities:

Christie, R. C., *Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance.* (London, 1880.)

Boulmier, Joseph, *Etienne Dolet, Sa Vie, Ses Œuvres, Son Martyre.* (Paris, 1857.)

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[3] Here are the last two verses in the fine old French.

De patience ung bon cueur jouyassant,
Dessoubz le mal jamais n'est flechissant;
Se desolant ou en riens gemissant,
Tousjours vaincqueur.

Sus, mon esprit, monstrés vous de tel cueur;
Vostre asseurance au besoigng soit congneue:
Tout gentil cueur, tout constant bellicqueur,
Jusqu 'a la mort sa force a maintenue!

Rough translation:—"A good heart, sustained with patience, never bends under evil, bewails or moans, but is always victor. Courage, my soul, and show such a heart; let your confidence be seen in trial: every noble heart, every constant warrior, maintains his fortitude even unto death."

GEORGE ELIOT.

Mary Ann Evans, afterwards Mrs. Lewes, and finally Mrs. Cross was one of the greatest writers of the third quarter of this century. The noble works of fiction she published under the pseudonym of George Eliot are known to all. Her earliest writing was done for the *Westminster Review*, a magazine of marked sceptical tendency. Her inclination to Freethonght is further shown by her translation of Strauss's famous *Life of Jesus* and Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, the latter being the work of a profound Atheist. George Eliot was, to some extent, a disciple of Comte, and reckoned a member of the Society of Positivists. Mr. Myers tells us that in the last conversation he had with her at Cambridge, they talked of God, Immortality and Duty, and she gravely remarked how hypothetical was the first, how improbable was the second, and how sternly real the last. Whenever in her novels she speaks in the first person she breathes the same sentiment. Her biography has been written by her second husband, who says that "her long illness in the autumn had left her no power to rally. She passed away about ten o'clock at night on the 22nd of December, 1880. She died, as she would herself have chosen to die, without protracted pain, and with every faculty brightly vigorous."[4] Her body lies in the next grave to that of George Henry Lewes at Highgate Cemetery: her spirit, the product of her life, has, in her own words, joined "the choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world."

FREDERICK THE GREAT.

Frederick the Great, the finest soldier of his age, the maker of Prussia, and therefore the founder of modern Germany, was born in January, 1712. His life forms the theme of Carlyle's masterpiece. Notoriously a disbeliever in Christianity, as his writings and correspondence attest, he loved to surround himself with Freethinkers, the most con-

[4] *Life and Letters of George Eliot*, by J. W. Cross, Vol. III., p. 439

spicuous of whom was Voltaire. When the great French heretic died, Frederick pronounced his eulogium before the Berlin Academy, denouncing "the imbecile priests," and declaring that "The best destiny they can look for is that they and their vile artifices will remain forever buried in the darkness of oblivion, while the fame of Voltaire will increase from age to age, and transmit his name to immortality."

When the old king was on his death-bed, one of his subjects, solicitous about his immortal soul, sent him a letter full of pious advice. "Let this," he said, "be answered civilly; the intention of the writer is good." Shortly after, on August 17, 1786, Frederick died in his own fashion. Carlyle says:

"For the most part he was unconscious, never more than half conscious. As the wall clock above his head struck eleven, he asked: 'What o'clock?' 'Eleven,' answered they. 'At four,' murmured he, 'I will arise.' One of his dogs sat on its stool near him; about midnight he noticed it shivering for cold: 'Throw a quilt over it,' said or beckoned he; that, I think, was his last completely conscious utterance. Afterwards, in a severe choking fit, getting at last rid of the phlegm, he said, '*La montagne est passé, nous irons mieux*—We are on the hill, we shall go better now.'" [5]

Better it was. The pain was over, and the brave old king, who had wrestled with all Europe and thrown it, succumbed quietly to the inevitable defeat which awaits us all.

LEON GAMBETTA.

Gambetta was the greatest French orator and statesman of his age. He was one of those splendid and potent figures who redeem nations from commonplace. To him, more than to any other man, the present Republic owes its existence. He played deeply for it in the great game of life and death after Sedan, and by his titanic organisation of the national defence he made it impossible for Louis Napoleon to reseat himself on the throne with the aid of German bayonets. Again, in 1877, he saved the Republic he loved so well from the monarchial conspirators. He defeated their base attempt to subvert a nation's liberties, but the struggle sapped his

[5] *Frederick the Great*, Vol. VI., p. 694; edition, 1869.

enormous vitality, which had already been impaired by the terrible labors of his Dictatorship. He died at the early age of forty-four, having exhausted his strength in fighting for freedom. Scarcely a dark thread was left in the leonine mane of black hair, and the beard matched the whiteness of his shroud.

France mourned like one man at the hero's death. The people gave him a funeral that eclipsed the obsequies of kings. He was carried to his grave by a million citizens. Yet in the whole of that vast throng, as Mr. Frederic Harrison remarked, "there was no emblem of Christ, no priest of God, not one mutter of heaven, no hollow appeal to the mockery of the resurrection, no thought but for the great human loss and human sorrow. It was the first time in the history of Europe that a foremost man had been laid to rest by a nation in grief, without priest or church, prayer or hymn."[6]

Like almost every eminent Republican, Gambetta was a Freethinker. As Mr. Frederic Harrison says, "he systematically and formally repudiated any kind of acceptance of theology." During his lifetime he never entered a church, even when attending a marriage or a funeral, but stopped short at the door, and let who would go inside and listen to the mummery of the priest. In his own expressive words, he declined to be "rocked asleep by the myths of childish religions." He professed himself an admirer and a disciple of Voltaire—*l'admirateur et le disciple de Voltaire.* Every member of his ministry was a Freethinker, and one of them, the eminent scientist Paul Bert, a militant Atheist. Speaking at a public meeting not long before his death, Gambetta called Comte the greatest thinker of this century; that Comte who proposed to "reorganise society, without God and without king, by the systematic cultus of humanity."

When John Stuart Mill died, a Christian journal, which died itself a few weeks after, declared he had gone to hell, and wished all his friends and disciples would follow him. Several pious prints expressed similar sentiments with regard

[6] Mr. Harrison's words were thus reported in the newspapers. The passage appears slightly, though not materially altered, in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1883, p. 323.

to Gambetta. Passing by the English papers, let us look at a few French ones. The Duc de Broglie's organ, naturally anxious to insult the statesman who had so signally beaten him, said that "he died suddenly after hurling defiance at God." The *Pays*, edited by that pious bully, Paul de Cassagnac, said—"He dies, poisoned by his own blood. He set himself up against God. He has fallen. It is fearful. But it is just." The Catholic *Univers* said, "While he was recruiting his strength and meditating fresh assaults upon the Church, and promising himself victory, the divine Son of the Carpenter was preparing his coffin."

These tasteful exhibitions of Christian charity show that Gambetta lived and died a Freethinker. Yet the sillier sort of Christians have not scrupled to insinuate and even argue, that he was secretly a believer. One asinine priest, M Feuillet des Conches, formerly Vicar of Notre Dame des Victoires, and then honorary Chamberlain to the Pope, stated in the London *Times* that, about two years before his death, Gambetta came to his church with a brace of big wax tapers which he offered in memory of his mother. He also added that the great orator knelt before the Virgin, dipped his finger in holy water, and made the sign of the cross. Was there ever a more absurd story? Gambetta was a remarkable looking man, and extremely well known. He could not have entered a church unobserved, and had he done so, the story would have gone round Paris the next day. Yet nobody heard of it till after his death. Either the priest mistook some portly dark man for Gambetta, or he was guilty of a pious fraud.

According to another story, Gambetta said "I am lost" when the doctors told him he could not recover. But the phrase *Je suis perdu* has no theological significance. Nothing is more misleading than a literal translation. Gambetta simply meant "It is all over then." This monstrous perversion of a simple phrase could only have arisen from sheer malice or gross ignorance of French.

While lying on his death-bed Gambetta listened to Rabelais, Molière, and other favorite but not very pious authors, read aloud by a young student who adored him. Almost his

last words, as recorded in the *Times*, were these—"Well, I have suffered so much, it will be a deliverance." The words are calm, collected, and truthful. There is no rant and no quailing. It is the natural language of a strong man confronting Death after long agony. Shortly after he breathed his last. The deliverance had come. Still lay the mighty heart and the fertile brain that had spent themselves for France, and the silence was only broken by the sobs of dear friends who would have died to save him. No priest administered "the consolations of religion," and he expressly ordered that he should be buried without religious rites. His great heroic genius was superior to the creeds, seeing through them and over them. He lived and died a Freethinker, like nearly all the great men since Mirabeau and Danton who have built up the freedom and glory of France.

GARIBALDI.

Giuseppe Garibaldi's name is a household word in every civilised country. His romantic life and superb achievements are too well known to need any recital in these pages. The Lion of Caprera found the priests the greatest enemies of his beloved Italy, and he hated them accordingly. "The priest," he says in the preface to his *Memoirs*, "the priest is the personification of falsehood, the liar is a thief, and the thief an assassin."[7] His English biographer, Theodore Bent, admits that in his old age he grew more and more sceptical. "One of his laconic letters of 1880," he says, "illustrates this. It was as follows:—'Dear friends,—Man has created God, not God man. Yours ever, Garibaldi.'"

We have no account of Garibaldi's last moments, but he died daily in his crippled and helpless old age, and his cheerful fortitude was known to all. He desired his body to be cremated, and gave strict orders that no priest should officiate at his funeral. He also had his sarcophagus built at Caprera, but the family yielded to the wish of the government, and he was buried at Rome.

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[7] Garibaldi, *Memorie Autobiografiche* p. 2.

ISAAC GENDRE.

The controversy over the death of this Swiss Freethinker was summarised in the London *Echo* of July 29, 1881.

"A second case of death-bed conversion of an eminent Liberal to Roman Catholicism, suggested probably by that of the great French philologist Littré, has passed the round of the Swiss papers. A few days ago the veteran leader of the Freiburg Liberals, M. Isaac Gendre, died. The *Ami du Peuple*, the organ of the Freiburg Ultramontanes, immediately set afloat the sensational news that when M. Gendre found that his last hour was approaching, he sent his brother to fetch a priest in order that the last sacraments might be administered to him, and the evil which he had done during his life by his persistent Liberalism might be atoned by his repentance at the eleventh hour. This brother, M. Alexandre Gendre, now writes to the paper stating that there is not one word of truth in this story. What possible benefit can any Church derive from the invention of such tales? Doubtless there is a credulous residuum which believes that there must be 'some truth' in anything which has once appeared in print."

It might be added that many people readily believe what pleases them, and that a lie which has a good start is very hard to run down.

EDWARD GIBBON.

Edward Gibbon, the greatest of modern historians, was born at Putney, near London, on April 27, 1737. His monumental work, the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which Carlyle called "the splendid bridge from the old world to the new," is universally known and admired. To have your name mentioned by Gibbon, said Thackeray, is like having it written on the dome of St. Peter's which is seen by pilgrims from all parts of the earth. Twenty years of his life were devoted to his colossal History, which incidentally conveys his opinion of many problems. His views on Christianity are indicated in his famous fifteenth chapter, which is a masterpiece of grave and temperate irony. When Gibbon wrote that "it was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agree-

able or useful," every sensible reader understood his meaning. The polite sneer rankled in the breasts of the clergy, who replied with declamation and insult. Their answers, however, are forgotten, while his merciless sarcasms live on, and help to undermine the Church in every fresh generation.

Gibbon did not long survive the completion of his great work. The last volumes of the *Decline and Fall* were published on May 8, 1788, and he died on January 14th, 1794. His malady was dropsy. After being twice tapped in November, he removed to the house of his devoted friend, Lord Sheffield. A week before he expired he was obliged for the sake of the highest medical attendance, to return to his lodgings in St. James's Street, London. The following account of his last moments was written by Lord Sheffield:

"During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a feeling of nausea. Soon after nine he took his opium draught and went to bed. About ten he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven the servant asked whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar [the doctor]. He answered, No; that he was as well as the day before. At about half-past eight he got out of bed, and said he was 'plus adroit' than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again without assistance, better than usual. About nine he said he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet-de-chambre* returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, "Pourquoi est ce que vous me quittez?' [Why do you leave me?] This was about half-past eleven. At twelve o'clock he drank some brandy and water from a teapot, and desired his favorite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign to show that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir, his eyes half shut. About a quarter before one he ceased to breathe. The *valet-de-chambre* observed that *he did not, at any time, evince the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death.*"—*Last Days of Gibbon*, in Milman's edition of Gibbon, vol. i. (Introduction).

Mr. James Cotter Morison, in his admirable monograph on Gibbon, which forms a volume of Macmillan's "English Men

of Letters" series, quotes the whole of this passage from Lord Sheffield with the exception of the last sentence. In our opinion the words we have italicised are the most important in the extract, and should not have been withheld.

WILLIAM GODWIN.

William Godwin, the author of *Political Justice* and the father-in-law of Shelley, was born on March 3, 1756, and he died on April 7, 1836. Only a few days before his death he wrote to his daughter, Mrs. Shelley, as follows :—

"I leave behind me a manuscript in a considerable state of forwardness for the press, entitled, "The Genius of Christianity Unveiled: in a Series of Essays." . . . I am most unwilling that this, the concluding work of a long life, and written, as I believe, in the full maturity of my understanding, should be consigned to oblivion. It has been the main object of my life, since I attained to years of discretion, to do my part to free the human mind from slavery. I adjure you, therefore, or whomsoever else into whose hands these papers may fall, not to allow them to be consigned to oblivion."

Mrs. Shelley seems to have disregarded this solemn adjuration, for the work was not published till 1873, when it was issued by Mr. C. Kegan Paul, to whose *Life of William Godwin* we are indebted.

GOETHE.

The greatest of German poets died at a ripe old age on March 22, 1832. He was a Pantheist after the manner of Spinoza, and his countrymen called him the "great pagan." In one of his epigrams he expresses hatred of four things—garlic, onions, bugs, and the cross. Heine, in his *De l'Allemagne*, notices Goethe's "vigorous heathen nature," and his "militant antipathy to Christianity." His English biographer thus describes his last moments:

"His speech was becoming less and less distinct. The last words audible were: More light! The final darkness grew apace, and he whose eternal longing had been for more Light, gave a parting cry for it, as he was passing under the shadow of death. He con-

tinued to express himself by signs, drawing letters with his forefinger in the air, while he had strength, and finally as life ebbed away drawing figures slowly on the shawl which covered his legs. At half-past twelve he composed himself in the corner of the chair. The watcher placed a finger on her lips to intimate that he was asleep. If sleep it was, it was a sleep in which a great life glided from the world." [8]

Let us add that infinite nonsense, from which even Lewes was obviously not free, has been talked and written about Gothe's cry "More light." His meaning was of course purely physical. The eyesight naturally fails in death, all things grow dim, and the demand for "more light" is common enough at such times.

GEORGE GROTE.

George Grote, the author of our classic *History of Greece*, was born on November 17, 1794. He was a disciple of Bentham and a confirmed Atheist. His death, which occurred on June 18, 1871, was full of serenity. "Early in the month of June," writes Mrs. Grote, "a marked change supervened, and at the end of three weeks his honorable, virtuous, and laborious course was closed by a tranquil and painless death." [9]

The Rev. Peter Anton, in his *Masters of History*, obviously takes his account of Grote's death from this source, but it is worth noticing that he enhances, instead of weakening, the panegyric. "The great historian," he says, "passed away tranquilly and without pain; and thus was brought to a close a career singularly devoted, conscientious, and laborious, a life rich in virtue and honor and the esteem of the wise and the good." Three centuries ago Grote might have been burnt to death; but the custodians of Westminster Abbey are now anxious to enrich their precincts with celebrities, and the Atheist historian is interred there with Freethinkers like Ephraim Chambers, Sir Charles Lyell, and Charles Darwin.

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[8] *Life of Goethe*, by G. H. Lewes, p. 559.
[9] *Personal Life of George Grote.* By Mrs. Grote, p. 330.

HELVETIUS.

Helvetius, the French Philosopher, was born in 1715. His death took place on December 26, 1771. By accident or negligence, his famous treatise, *L'Esprit*, passed the censorship; but, on its true character being recognised, the censor was cashiered, and the author dismissed from an honorary post in the Queen's household. The indictment, says Mr. Morley, described the work as a "collection into one cover of everything that impiety could imagine, calculated to engender hatred against Christianity and Catholicism."[1] The book was publicly burnt, and the same fire consumed Voitaire's poem on Natural Religion. Here is a passage which may help to explain its fate.

"It is fanaticism that puts arms into the hands of Christian princes; it orders Catholics to massacre heretics; it brings out upon the earth again those tortures that were invented by such monsters as Phalaris, as Busiris, as Nero; in Spain it piles and lights up the fires of the Inquisition, while the pious Spaniards leave their ports and sail across distant seas, to plant the Cross and spread desolation in America. Turn your eyes to north or south, to east or west; on every side you see the consecrated knife of Religion raised against the breasts of women, of children, of old men, and the earth all smoking with the blood of victims immolated to false gods or the Supreme Being, and presenting one vast, sickening, horrible charnel-house of intolerance."

Marmontel describes Helvetius as "liberal, generous, unostentatious, and benevolent." His death was mourned by a wide circle of friends and dependants. "Day by day," says Condorcet, "he felt his strength failing. An attack of gout, which flew to the head and chest, deprived him at first of consciousness, and soon of life."[2]

HENRY HETHERINGTON.

Henry Hetherington, one of the heroes of "the free press," was born at Compton Street, Soho, London, in 1792. He

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[1] *Diderot*, Vol. II., p. 124.

[2] Essay by Condorcet, prefixed to the *Œuvres* of Helvetius (1784).

very early became an ardent reformer. In 1830 the Government obtained three convictions against him for publishing the *Poor Man's Guardian*, and he was lodged for six months in Clerkenwell gaol. At the end of 1832 he was again imprisoned there for six months, his treatment being most cruel. An opening, called a window, but without a pane of glass, let in the rain and snow by day and night. In 1841 he was a third time incarcerated in the Queen's Bench prison for four months. This time his crime was "blasphemy," in other words, publishing Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy*. He died on August 24, 1849, in his fifty-seventh year, leaving behind him his "Last Will and Testament," from which we take the following extracts:

"As life is uncertain, it behoves every one to make preparations for death; I deem it therefore a duty incumbent on me, ere I quit this life, to express in writing, for the satisfaction and guidance of esteemed friends, my feelings and opinions in reference to our common principles. I adopt this course that no mistake or misapprehension may arise through the false reports of those who officiously and obtrusively obtain access to the death-beds of avowed infidels to priestcraft and superstition; and who, by their annoying importunities, labor to extort from an opponent, whose intellect is already worn out and subdued by protracted physical suffering, some trifling admission, that they may blazon it forth to the world as a Death-bed Confession, and a triumph of Christianity over infidelity.

"In the first place, then, I calmly and deliberately declare that I do not believe in the popular notion of the existence of an Almighty, All-Wise and Benevolent God—possessing intelligence, and conscious of his own operations; because these attributes involve such a mass of absurdities and contradictions, so much cruelty and injustice on his part to the poor and destitute portion of his creatures—that, in my opinion, no rational reflecting mind can, after disinterested investigation, give credence to the existence of such a Being. 2nd. I believe death to be an eternal sleep—that I shall never live again in this world, or another, with a consciousness that I am the same identical person that once lived, performed the duties, and exercised the functions of a human being. 3rd. I consider priestcraft and superstition the greatest obstacle to human improvement and happiness. During my life I have, to the best of my ability, sincerely and strenuously exposed and opposed them, and die with a firm conviction that Truth, Justice, and Liberty will never be permanently established on earth till every vestige of priestcraft and superstition shall be utterly destroyed. 4th. I have ever considered that the only religion useful to man consists exclusively of the practice of morality, and in the mutual inter-

change of kind actions. In such a religion there is no room for priests—and when I see them interfering at our births, marriages and deaths, pretending to conduct us safely through this state of being to another and happier world, any disinterested person of the least shrewdness and discernment must perceive that their sole aim is to stultify the minds of the people by their incomprehensible doctrines, that they may the more effectually fleece the poor deluded sheep who listen to their empty babblings and mystifications. 5th. As I have lived so I die, a determined opponent to their nefarious and plundering system. I wish my friends, therefore, to deposit my remains in unconsecrated ground, and trust they will allow no priest, or clergyman of any denomination, to interfere in any way whatever at my funeral. My earnest desire is, that no relation or friend shall wear black or any kind of mourning, as I consider it contrary to our rational principles to indicate respect for a departed friend by complying with a hypocritical custom. 6th. I wish those who respect me, and who have labored in our common cause, to attend my remains to their last resting-place, not so much in consideration of the individual, as to do honor to our just, benevolent and rational principles. I hope all true Rationalists will leave pompous displays to the tools of priestcraft and superstition."

Hetherington wrote this Testament nearly two years before his death, but he signed it with a firm hand three days before he breathed his last, in the presence of Thomas Cooper, who left it at the *Reasoner* office for "the inspection of the curious or sceptical." Thomas Cooper is now a Christian, but he cannot repudiate what he printed at the time, or destroy his "personal testimony," as he called it, to the consistency with which Hetherington died in the principles of Freethought.

THOMAS HOBBES.

The philosopher of Malmesbury, as he is often called, was one of the clearest and boldest thinkers that ever lived. His theological proclivities are well expressed in his witty aphorism that superstition is religion out of fashion, and religion superstition in fashion. Although a courageous thinker, Hobbes was physically timid. This fact is explained by the circumtances of his birth. In the spring of 1588 all England was alarmed at the news that the mighty Spanish Armada had set sail for the purpose of deposing Queen Elizabeth, bringing the country under a foreign yoke, and re-establishing the

power of the papacy. In sheer fright, the wife of the vicar of Westport, now part of Malmesbury, gave premature birth to her second son on Good Friday, the 5th of April. This seven months' child used to say, in later life, that his mother brought forth himself and a twin brother Fear. He was delicate and nervous all his days. Yet through strict temperance he reached the great age of ninety-one, dying on the 4th of December, 1679.

This parson's son was destined to be hated by the clergy for his heresy. The Great Fire of 1666, following the Great Plague of the previous year, excited popular superstition, and to appease the wrath of God, a new Bill was intoduced in Parliament against Atheism and profaneness. The Committee to which the Bill was entrusted were empowered to "receive information touching" heretical books, and Hobbes's *Leviathan* was mentioned "in particular." The old philosopher, then verging on eighty, was naturally alarmed. Bold as he was in thought, his inherited physical timidity shrank from the prospect of the prison, the scaffold, or the stake. He made a show of conformity, and according to Bishop Kennet, who is not an irreproachable witness, he partook of the sacrament. It was said by some, however, that he acted thus in compliance with the wishes of the Devonshire family, who were his protectors and whose private chapel he attended. A noticeable fact was that he always went out before the sermon, and when asked his reason, he answered that "they could teach him nothing but what he knew." He spoke of the chaplain, Dr. Jasper Mayne, as "a very silly fellow."

Hated by the clergy, and especially by the bishops; owing his liberty and perhaps his life to powerful patrons; fearing that some fanatic might take the parsons' hints and play the part of an assassin; Hobbes is said to have kept a lighted candle in his bedroom. The fact, if it be such, is not mentioned in Professor Croom Robertson's exhaustive biography.[3] It is perhaps a bit of pious gossip. But were the story authentic, it would not show that Hobbes had any super-

[3] *Hobbes.* By George Croom Robertson. Blackwood and Sons 1886.

natural fears. He was more apprehensive of assassins than of ghosts and devils. Being very old, too, and his life precarious, he might well desire a light in his bedroom in case of accident or sudden sickness. The story is too trivial to deserve further notice. Orthodoxy must be hard pushed to dilate on so simple a thing as this.

According to one Christian tract, which is scarcely worth mention, although extensively circulated, Hobbes when dying said "he was about to take a leap in the dark." Every dying man might say the same with equal truth. Yet the story seems fictitious. I can discover no trace of it in any early authority.

Hobbes does not appear to have troubled himself about death. Bishop Kennet relates that only "the winter before he died he made a warm greatcoat, which he said must last him three years, and then he would have such another." Even so late as August, 1676, four months before his decease, he was "writing somewhat" for his publisher to "print in English." About the middle of October he had an attack of stranguary, and "Wood and Kennet both have it that, on hearing the trouble was past cure, he exclaimed, 'I shall be glad then to find a hole to creep out of the world at.'"[4] This story was picked up thirty years after Hobbes's death, and is probably apocryphal. If the philosopher said anything of the kind, he doubtless meant that, being very old, and without wife, child, or relative to care for him, he would be glad to find a shelter for his last moments, and to expire in comfort and peace. At the end of November his right side was paralysed, and he lost his speech. He "lingered in a somnolent state" for several days, says Professor Robertson, and "then his life quietly went out."

Bishop Kennet was absurd enough to hint that Hobbes's "lying some days in a silent stupefaction, did seem owing to his mind, more than his body."[5] An old man of ninety-one suffers a paralytic stroke, loses his speech, sinks into unconsciousness, and quietly expires. What could be more natural?

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[4] Robertson, p. 203.

[5] *Memoirs of the Cavendish Family*, p. 108.

Yet the Bishop, belonging to an order which always scents a brimstone flavor round the heretic's death-bed, must explain this stupor and inanition by supposing that the moribund philosopher was in a fit of despair. We have only to add that Bishop Kennet was not present at Hobbes's death. His theory is, therefore, only a professional surmise; and we may be sure that the wish was father to the thought.

AUSTIN HOLYOAKE.

This stedfast Freethinker was a younger brother of George Jacob Holyoake. He was of a singularly modest and amiable nature, and although he left many friends he left not a single enemy. He was entirely devoted to the Freethought cause, and satisfied to work hard behind the scenes while more popular figures took the credit and profit. His assiduity in the publishing business at Fleet Street, which was ostensibly managed by his better-known and more fortunate brother, induced a witty friend to call him "Jacob's ladder." Afterwards he threw in his lot with Charles Bradlaugh, then the redoubtable "Iconoclast," and became the printer and in part sub-editor of the *National Reformer*, to whose columns he was a frequent and welcome contributor. He died on April 10, 1874, and was interred at Highgate Cemetery, his funeral being largely attended by the London Freethinkers, including C. Bradlaugh, C. Watts, G. W. Foote, James Thomson and G. J. Holyoake. The malady that carried him off was consumption; he was conscious almost to the last; and his only regret in dying, at the comparatively early age of forty-seven, was that he could no longer fight the battle of freedom, nor protect the youth of his little son and daughter.

Two days before his death, Austin Holyoake dictated his last thoughts on religion, which were written down by his devoted wife, and printed in the *National Reformer* of April 19, 1874. Part of this document is filled with his mental history. In the remainder he reiterates his disbelief in the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. The following extracts are interesting and pertinent:

"Christians constantly tell Freethinkers that their principles of 'negation,' as they term them, may do very well for health; but when the hour of sickness and approaching death arrives they utterly break down, and the hope of a 'blessed immortality' can alone give consolation. In my own case I have been anxious to test the truth of this assertion, and have therefore deferred till the latest moment I think it prudent to dictate these few lines.

"To desire eternal bliss is no proof that we shall ever attain it; and it has long seemed to me absurd to believe in that which we wish for, however ardently. I regard all forms of Christianity as founded in selfishness. It is the expectation held out of bliss through all eternity, in return for the profession of faith in Christ and him crucified, that induces the erection of temples of worship in all Christian lands. Remove the extravagant promise, and you will hear very little of the Christian religion.

"As I have stated before, my mind being free from any doubts on these bewildering matters of speculation, I have experienced for twenty years the most perfect mental repose; and now I find that the near approach of death, the 'grim King of Terrors,' gives me not the slightest alarm. I have suffered, and am suffering, most intensely both by night and day; but this has not produced the least symptom of change of opinion. No amount of bodily torture can alter a mental conviction. Those who, under pain, say they see the error of their previous belief, had never thought out the subject for themselves."

These are words of transparent sincerity; not a phrase is strained, not a line aims at effect. Reading them, we feel in presence of an earnest man bravely confronting death, consciously sustained by his convictions, and serenely bidding the world farewell.

VICTOR HUGO.

The greatest French poet of this century, perhaps the greatest French poet of all time, was a fervent Theist, reverencing the prophet of Nazareth as a man, and holding that "the divine tear" of Jesus and "the human smile" of Voltaire "compose the sweetness of the present civilisation." But he was perfectly free from the trammels of creeds, and he hated priestcraft, like despotism, with a perfect hatred. In one of his striking later poems, *Religion et les Religions*, he derides and denounces the tenets and pretensions of Christianity. The Devil, he says to the clergy, is only the monkey

of superstition; your Hell is an outrage on Humanity and a blasphemy against God; and when you tell me that your deity made you in his own image, I reply that he must be very ugly.

As a man, as well as a writer, there was something magnificently grandiose about him. Subtract him from the nineteenth century, and you rob it of much of its glory. For nineteen years on a lonely channel island, an exile from the land of his birth and his love, he nursed the conscience of humanity within his mighty heart, brandishing the lightnings and thunders of chastisement over the heads of the political brigands who were stifling a nation, and prophesying their certain doom. When it came, after Sedan, he returned to Paris, and for fifteen years he was idolised by its people. There was great mourning at his death, and "all Paris" attended his funeral. But true to the simplicity of his life he ordered that his body should lie in a common coffin, which contrasted vividly with the splendid procession. France buried him, as she did Gambetta; he was laid to rest in the Church of St. Geneviève, re-secularised as the Pantheon for the occasion; and the interment took place without any religious rites.

Hugo's great oration on Voltaire, in 1878, roused the ire of the Bishop of Orleans, who reprimanded him in a public letter. The freethinking poet sent a crushing reply:

"France had to pass an ordeal. France was free. A man traitorously seized her in the night, threw her down and garrotted her. If a people could be killed, that man had slain France. He made her dead enough for him to reign over her. He began his reign, since it was a reign, with perjury, lying in wait, and massacre. He continued it by oppression, by tyranny, by despotism, by an unspeakable parody of religion and justice. He was monstrous and little. The Te Deum, Magnificat, Salvum fac, Gloria tibi, were sung for him. Who sang them? Ask yourself. The law delivered the people up to him. The church delivered God up to him. Under that man sank down right, honor, country; he had beneath his feet oath, equity, probity, the glory of the flag, the dignity of men, the liberty of citizens. That man's prosperity disconcerted the human conscience. It lasted nineteen years. During that time you were in a palace. I was in exile. I pity you, sir."

Despite this terrible rebuff to Bishop Dupanloup, another

priest, Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, had the temerity and bad taste to obtrude himself when Victor Hugo lay dying in 1885. Being born on February 26, 1802, the poet was in his eighty-fourth year, and expiring naturally of old age. Had the rites of the Church been performed on him in such circumstances, it would have been an insufferable farce. Yet the Archbishop wrote to Madame Lockroy, offering to bring personally "the succor and consolation so much needed in these cruel ordeals." Monsieur Lockroy at once replied as follows:

"Madame Lockroy, who cannot leave the bedside of her father-in-law, begs me to thank you for the sentiments which you have expressed with so much eloquence and kindness. As regards M. Victor Hugo, he has again said within the last few days, that he had no wish during his illness to be attended by a priest of any persuasion. We should be wanting in our duty if we did not respect his resolution."[6]

Hugo's death-chamber was thus unprofaned by the presence of a priest. He expired in peace, surrounded by the beings he loved. According to the *Times* correspondent in Paris, "Almost his last words, addressed to his granddaughter, were, 'Adieu, Jeanne, adieu!' And his last movement of consciousness was to clasp his grandson's hand." The hero-poet bade his charming grandchildren adieu; but the world will not bid them adieu, any more than him, for he has immortalised them in his imperishable *L'Art d'être Grandpère*, every page of which is scented with the deathless perfume of adorable love.

DAVID HUME.

Professor Huxley ventures to call David Hume "the most acute thinker of the eighteenth century, even though it produced Kant."[7] Hume's greatness is no less clearly acknowledged by Joseph De Maistre, the foremost champion of the Papacy in our own century. "I believe," he says, "that taking all into account, the eighteenth century, so fertile in

[6] London *Times*, May 23, 1885: Paris Correspondent's letter.
[7] *Lay Sermons*, p. 141

this respect, has not produced a single enemy of religion who can be compared with him. His cold venom is far more dangerous than the foaming rage of Voltaire. If ever, among men who have heard the gospel preached, there has existed a veritable Atheist (which I will not undertake to decide) it is he."[8] Allowing for the personal animosity in his estimate of Hume, De Maistre is as accurate as Huxley. The immortal *Essays* attest both his penetration and his scepticism; the one on Miracles being a perpetual stumbling-block to Christian apologists. With superb irony, Hume closes that portentous discourse with a reprimand of "those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the Christian Religion, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason." He reminds them that "our most holy religion is founded on *faith*, not on *reason*." He remarks that Christianity was "not only attended by miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one." For "whoever is moved by *faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience."

Hume was born at Edinburgh on April 26, 1711. His life was the uneventful one of a literary man. Besides his *Essays*, he published a *History of England*, which was the first serious effort in that direction. Judged by the standard of our day it is inadequate; but it abounds in philosophical reflections of the highest order, and its style is nearly perfect. Gibbon, who was a good judge of style, had an unbounded admiration for Hume's "careless inimitable beauties."

Fortune, however, was not so kind to him as fame. At the age of forty, his frugal habits had enabled him to save no more than £1,000. He reckoned his income at £50 a year, but his wants were few, his spirit was cheerful, and there were few prizes in the lottery of life for which he would have made an exchange. In 1775 his health began to fail. Knowing that his disorder (hemorrhage of the bowels) would

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[8] *Lettres sur l'Inquisition*, pp. 147, 148.

prove fatal, he made his will, and wrote *My Own Life*, the conclusion of which, says Huxley, "is one of the most cheerful, simple and dignified leave-takings of life and all its concerns, extant." He died on August 25, 1776, and was buried a few days later on the eastern slope of Calton Hill, Edinburgh, his body being "attended by a great concourse of people, who seem to have anticipated for it the fate appropriate to wizards and necromancers." [9]

Dr. Adam Smith, the great author of the *Wealth of Nations*, was one of Hume's most intimate friends. He tell us that Hume went to London in April, 1776, and soon after his return he "gave up all hope of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation." His cheerfulness was so great that many people could not believe he was dying. "Mr. Hume's magnanimity and firmness were such," says Adam Smith, "that his most affectionate friends knew that they hazarded nothing in talking and writing to him as a dying man, and that, so far from being hurt by this frankness, he was rather pleased and flattered by it." His chief thought in relation to the possible prolongation of his life, which his friends hoped although he told them their hopes were groundless, was that he would have "the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition." On August 8, Adam Smith went to Kircaldy, leaving Hume in a very weak state but still very cheerful. On August 28, he received the following letter from Dr. Black, the physician, announcing the philosopher's death:

"EDINBURGH, MONDAY, AUG. 26, 1776. DEAR SIR, Yesterday, about four o'clock, afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you, desiring you not to come. When he became weak

[9] *Hume*, by Professor Huxley, p. 43.

it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it."

"Thus," says Adam Smith, "died our most excellent and never to be forgotten friend. . . . Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit." [1]

M. LITTRE.

This great French Positivist died in 1882 at the ripe age of eighty-one. M. Littré was one of the foremost writers in France. His monumental "Dictionary of the French Language" is the greatest work of its kind in the world. As a scholar and a philosopher his eminence was universally recognised. His character was so pure and sweet that a Catholic lady called him "a saint who does not believe in God." Although not rich, his purse was ever open to the claims of charity. He was one who "did good by stealth," and his benefactions were conferred without respect to creed. A Freethinker himself, he patronised the Catholic orphanage near his residence, and took a keen interest in the welfare of its inmates. He was an honor to France, to the world, and to the Humanity which he loved and served instead of God.

M. Littré's wife was an ardent Catholic, yet she was allowed to follow her own religious inclinations without the least interference. The great Freethinker valued liberty of conscience above all other rights, and what he claimed for himself he conceded to others. He scorned to exercise authority even in the domestic circle, where so much tyranny is practised. His wife, however, was less scrupulous. After enjoying for so many years the benefit of his steadfast toleration, she took advantage of her position to exclude his friends from his death-bed, to have him baptised in his last moments, and to secure his burial in consecrated ground with pious

[1] *Letter to William Strahan*, dated November 9, 1776, and usually prefixed to Hume's *History of England*.

rites. Not satisfied with this, she even allowed it to be understood that her husband had recanted his heresy and died in the bosom of the Church. The Abbé Huvelin, her confessor, who frequently visited M. Littré during his last illness, assisted her in the fraud.

There was naturally a disturbance at M. Littré's funeral. As the *Standard* correspondent wrote, his friends and disciples were "very angry at this recantation *in extremis*, and claimed that dishonest priestcraft took advantage of the darkness cast over that clear intellect by the mist of approaching death to perform the rites of the Church over his semi-inanimate body." While the body was laid out in Catholic fashion, with crucifixes, candles, and priests telling their beads, Dr. Galopin advanced to the foot of the coffin and spoke as follows:—

"Master, you used to call me your son, and you loved me. I remain your disciple and your defender. I come, in the name of Positive Philosophy, to claim the rights of universal Freemasonry. A deception has been practised upon us, to try and steal you from thinking humanity. But the future will judge your enemies and ours. Master we will revenge you by making our children read your books."

At the grave, M. Wyrouboff, editor of the Comtist review *La Philosophie Positive*, founded by M. Littré, delivered a brief address to the Freethinkers who remained, which concluded thus—

"Littré proved by his example that it is possible for a man to possess a noble and generous heart, and at the same time espouse a doctrine which admits nothing beyond what is positively real and which prevents any recantation. And gentlemen, *in spite of deceptive appearance, Littré died as he had lived, without contradictions or weakness.* All those who knew that calm and serene mind—and I was of the number of those who did—are well aware that it was irrevocably closed to the 'unknowable,' and that it was thoroughly prepared to meet courageously the irresistible laws of nature. And now sleep in peace, proud and noble thinker! You will not have the eternity of a world to come, which you never expected; but you leave behind you your country that you strove honestly to serve, the Republic which you always loved, a generation of disciples who will remain faithful to you; and last, but not least, you leave your thoughts and your virtues to the whole world. Social immortality, the only beneficent and fecund immortality, commences for you to-day."

M. Wyrouboff afterwards amply proved his statements.

The English press creditably rejected the story of M. Littré's recantation. The *Daily News* sneered at it, the *Times* described it as absurd, the *Standard* said it looked untrue. But the *Morning Advertiser* was still more outspoken. It said:

"There can hardly be a doubt that M. Littré died a steadfast adherent to the principles he so powerfully advocated during his laborious and distinguished life. The Church may claim, as our Paris correspondent, in his interesting note on the subject, tells us she is already claiming, the death-bed conversion of the great unbeliever, who for the last thirty-five years was one of her most active and formidable enemies. She has attempted to take the same posthumous revenge on Voltaire, on Paine, and on many others, who were described by Roman Catholic writers as calling in the last dreadful hour for the spiritual support they held up to ridicule in the confidence of health and the presumption of their intellect."

In the Paris *Gaulois* there appeared a letter from the Abbé Huvelin, written very ambiguously, and obviously intended to mislead. But one fact stands out clear. This priest was only admitted to visit M. Littré as a friend, and he was not allowed to baptise him. The Archbishop of Paris also, in his official organ, *La Semaine Religieuse*, admitted that "he received the sacrament of baptism on the morning of the very day of his death, *not from the hands of the priest*, who had not yet arrived, *but from those of Madame Littré*." The Archbishop, however, insists that he "received the ordinance in perfect consciousness and with his own full consent." Now as M. Littré was eighty-one years old, as he had been for twelve months languishing with a feeble hold on life, during which time he was often in a state of stupor, and as this was the very morning of his death, I leave the reader to estimate the value of what the Archbishop calls "perfect consciousness and full consent." If *any* consent was given by the dying Freethinker, it was only to gratify his wife and daughter, and at the last moment when he had no will to resist; for if he had been more compliant they would certainly have baptised him before. Submission in these circumstances counts for nothing; and in any case there is forceful truth in M. Littré's words, written in 1879 in his *Conservation, Revolution, et Positivisme*—"*a whole life passed without any observance of eligious rites must outweigh the single final act.*"

Unfortunately for the clericals, there exists a document which may be considered M. Littré's last confession. It is an article written for the Comtist review a year before his death, entitled, "Pour la Dernière Fois"—For the Last Time. While writing it he knew that his end was not far off. "For many months," he says, "my sufferings have prostrated me with dreadful persistence. . . . Every evening when I have to be put to bed, my pains are exasperated, and often I have not the strength to stifle cries which are grievous to me and grievous to those who tend me." After the article was completed his malady increased. Fearing the worst, he wrote to his friend, M. Caubet, as follows:

"Last Saturday I swooned away for a long time. It is for that reason I send you, a little prematurely, my article for the Review. *If I live*, I will correct the proofs as usual. *If I die*, let it be printed and published in the Review as a posthumous article. It will be a last trouble which I venture to give you. The reader must do his best to follow the manuscript faithfully."

If I live—If I die! These are the words of one in the shadow of Death.

Let us see what M. Littré's last confession is. I translate two passages from the article. Referring to Charles Greville, he says:

"I feel nothing of what he experienced. Like him, I find it impossible to accept the theory of the world which Catholicism [2] prescribes to all true believers; but I do not regret being without such doctrines, and I cannot discover in myself any wish to return to them."

And he concludes the article with these words:

"Positive Philosophy, which has so supported me since my thirtieth year, and which, in giving me an ideal, a craving for progress, the vision of history and care for humanity, has preserved me from being a simple negationist, accompanies me faithfully in these last trials. The questions it solves in its own way, the rules it prescribes by virtue of its principle, the beliefs it discountenances in the name of our ignorance of everything absolute; of these I have in the preceding pages made an examination, which I conclude with the supreme word of the commencement, for the last time."

So much for the lying story of M. Littré's recantation. In

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[2] To a Frenchman, Catholicism and Christianity mean one and the same thing.

the words of M. Wyrouboff, although his corpse was accompanied to the grave by priests and believers, his name will go down to future generations as that of one who was to the end "a servant to science and an enemy to superstition."

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

This gifted woman died on May 27, 1876, after a long and useful life, filled with literary labor in the cause of progress. On April 19, less than six weeks before her death, she wrote her last letter to Mr. H. G. Atkinson, from which the following is taken.

"I cannot think of any future as at all probable, except the 'annihilation' from which some people recoil with so much horror. I find myself here in the universe—I know not how, whence or why. I see everything in the universe go out and disappear, and I see no reason for supposing that it is not an actual and entire death. And for my part, I have no objection to such an extinction. I well remember the passion with which W. E. Forster said to me 'I had rather be damned than annihilated.' If he once felt five minutes' damnation, he would be thankful for extinction in preference. The truth is, I care little about it any way. Now that the event draws near, and that I see how fully my household expect my death pretty soon, the universe opens so widely before my view, and I see the old notions of death, and scenes to follow, so merely human—so impossible to be true, when one glances through the range of science,—that I see nothing to be done but to wait, without fear or hope or ignorant prejudice, for the expiration of life. I have no wish for future experience, nor have I any fear of it. Under the weariness of illness I long to be asleep."[3]

These are the words of a brave woman, who met Death with the same fortitude as she exhibited in the presence of the defenders of slavery in the United States.

JEAN MESLIER.

Jean Meslier, or more correctly Mellier, was born on June 15, 1664. His death occurred in 1733. He was curé, or parish priest, of Entrépigny. He left his small property to

[3] *Autobiography of Harriet Martineau*, Vol. III., p. 454; edition 1877.

his parishioners, and asked to be buried in his own garden. Among his effects were found three copies of a manuscript of 370 folios, signed by his own hand and entitled *My Testament.* The writing was found to be a merciless exposure of Christianity. What he could not say while alive, he said in this legacy to his flock. As he himself wrote on the wrapper of the copy for his parishioners, "I have not dared to say it during my life, but I will say it at least in dying or after my death." On November 17, 1794, the National Convention sent to the Committee of Public Instruction a proposal to erect a statue to Meslier as "the first priest who had the courage and honesty to abjure his religious errors." A work called *Bon Sens*, translated into English as *Good Sense*, is not by Meslier, but by D'Holbach.

Authorities:
Larousse, *Dictionnaire Universelle.*
Bouilliot, *Biographie Ardenaise.*
Voltaire's *Works* and *Letters.*

JAMES MILL.

James Mill, the author of the *History of British India*, the *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, and other works, was a robust thinker and a powerful writer himself; though his name became more illustrious when borne by his great son, John Stuart Mill. James Mill was born in 1773. He would have entered the pulpit as a Presbyterian preacher, had he not "by his own studies and reflections been led to reject not only the belief in Revelation, but the foundations of what is commonly called Natural Religion."[4] He came to the conviction that "concerning the origin of things nothing whatever can be known." He looked upon religion as "the greatest enemy of morality," and he regarded the God of Christianity as an embodiment of the "*ne plus ultra* of wickedness." From these views he never departed. His death occurred on June 23, 1836. Mrs. Grote says "he died without any pain or struggle, of long standing pulmonary

[4] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 38.

phthisis." Francis Place wrote as follows to Mrs. Grote on June 15.

"Stayed too long with poor Mill, who showed much more sympathy and affection than ever before in all our long friendship. But he was all the time as much of a bright reasoning man as ever he was—reconciled to his fate, brave, and calm to an extent which I never before witnessed, except in another old friend, Thomas Holcroft, the day before the day of his death." [5]

Holcroft and Place, it should be added, were both Freethinkers.

JOHN STUART MILL.

Mill was born in Rodney Street, Pentonville, London, on May 20, 1806, and he died at Avignon on May 8, 1873. Notwithstanding the unguarded admissions in the one of his three *Essays on Religion* which he never prepared for the press, it is certain that he lived and died a Freethinker. His father educated him without theology, and he never really imbibed any afterwards. Professor Bain, his intimate friend and his biographer, tells us that "he absented himself during his whole life from religious services," and that "in everything characteristic of the creed of Christendom he was a thorough-going negationist. He admitted neither its truth nor its utility." [6] Mr. John Morley also, in his admirably written account of the last day he spent with Mill,[7] says that he looked forward to a general growth of the religion of Humanity.

Mill was one of the pall-bearers at Grote's funeral in 1871. He accepted the office under great pressure, and on walking out of Westminster Abbey with Professor Bain he remarked—"In no very long time, I shall be laid in the ground with a very different ceremonial from that." [8] Professor Bain observes:

"It so happened, however, that a prayer was delivered at his own interment by the Protestant pastor at Avignon, who thereby

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[5] Prof. A. Bain, *James Mill*, p. 409.
[6] *John Stuart Mill*, by Alexander Bain, pp. 139, 140.
[7] *Miscellanies*, Vol. III. [8] Bain, p. 133.

got himself into trouble, from Mill's known scepticism, and had to write an exculpation in the local newspaper."[9]

This pastor had become friendly with Mill at Avignon. According to Professor Bain, he was "a very intelligent and liberal-minded man." When the *Democratie du Midi* announced that Mill had received *les derniers secours de la réligion* (the last consolations of religion) on his death-bed, M. Rey, honorably denied the statement, and said, *Il n'y avait point de pasteur près du lit de M. Mill*—"There was no clergyman at Mr. Mill's bedside."[1]

Mill died of erysipelas consequent on a fall. Three days before his death he walked fifteen miles. Dr. Gurney thus describes his last hours:

"Mr. Mill suffered but little, except in swallowing, and from the heat and weight of the enormous swelling, which, by the time I arrived from Nice, had already spread over his face and neck; and yet he learned from me on my arrival the fatal nature of the attack with calmness and resignation. His express desire that he might not lose his mental faculties was gratified, for his great intellect remained clear to the last moment. His wish that his funeral might be quiet and simple, as indeed, his every wish, was attended to by his loving step-daughter with devoted solicitude."[2]

Mill's death was not misrepresented in England. On the contrary, one religious journal, which died itself soon afterwards, declared its opinion that his soul was burning in hell, and expressed a hearty wish that his disciples would soon follow him.

MIRABEAU.

Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, son and heir of the Marquis de Mirabeau, was born on March 9, 1747. He came of a wild strong stock, and was a magnificent "enormous" fellow at his birth, the head being especially great. The turbulent life of the man has been graphically told by Carlyle in his *Essays* and in the *French Revolution*. Faults he had many,

[9] Ibid, 133.

[1] M. Rey's letter is given in *La Critique Philosophique*, June 5, 1873, p. 283.

[2] *Daily News*, May 12, 1873.

but not that of insincerity; with all his failings, he was a gigantic mass of veracious humanity. "Moralities not a few," says Carlyle, "must shriek condemnatory over this Mirabeau; the Morality by which he could be judged has not yet got uttered in the speech of men."

Mirabeau's work in the National Assembly belongs to history. It was mighty and splendid, but it cannot be recited here. His life burned away during those fateful months the incessant labor and excitement almost passing credibility. "If I had not lived with him," says Dumont, "I never should have known what a man can make of one day, what things may be placed within the interval of twelve hours. A day for this man was more than a week or a month is for others." One day his secretary said to him "Monsieur le Comte, what you require is impossible." Whereupon Mirabeau started from his chair, with the memorable ejaculation, "Impossible! Never name to me that blockhead of a word."—*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot.*

But the Titan of the Revolution was exhausted before his task was done. In January, 1791, he sat as President of the Assembly with his neck bandaged after the application of leeches. At parting he said to Dumont "I am dying, my friend; dying as by slow fire." On the 27th of March he stood in the tribune for the last time. Four days later he was on his death-bed. Crowds beset the street, anxious but silent, and stopping all traffic so that their hero might not be disturbed. A bulletin was issued every three hours. "On Saturday the second day of April," says Carlyle, "Mirabeau feels that the last of the Days has risen for him; that on this day he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been. Lit up, for the last time, in the glare of the coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable."[3]

Gazing out on the Spring sun, Mirabeau said, *Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin germain*—If that is not God, it

[3] *French Revolution*, Vol. II., p. 120.

is at least his cousin german. It was the great utterance of an eighteenth-century Pagan, looking across the mists of Christian superstition to the saner nature-worship of antiquity.

Power of speech gone, Mirabeau made signs for paper and pen, and wrote the word *Dormir* "To sleep." Cabanis, the great physician, who stood beside him, pretended not to understand this passionate request for opium. Thereupon, writes the doctor, "he made a sign for the pen and paper to be brought to him again, and wrote, 'Do you think that Death is dangerous?'—Seeing that I did not comply with his demand, he wrote again, '. . . How can you leave your friend on the wheel, perhaps for days?'" Cabanis and Dr. Petit decided to give him a sedative. While it was sent for "the pains became atrocious." Recovering speech a little under the torture, he turned to M. de la Marck, saying, "You deceive me." "No," replied his friend, "we are not deceiving you. the remedy is coming, we all saw it ordered." "Ah, the doctors, the doctors!" he muttered. Then, turning to Cabanis, with a look of mingled anger and tenderness, he said, "Were you not my doctor and my friend? Did you not promise to spare me the agonies of such a death? Do you wish me to expire with a regret that I trusted you?"

"Those words," says Cabanis, "the last that he uttered, ring incessantly in my ears. He turned over on the right side with a convulsive movement, and at half-past eight in the morning he expired in our arms."[4] Dr. Petit, standing at the foot of the bed, said "His sufferings are ended." "So dies," writes Carlyle, "a gigantic Heathen and Titan; stumbling blindly, undismayed, down to his rest."

Mirabeau was an Atheist, and he was buried as became his philosophy and his greatness. The Assembly decreed a Public Funeral; there was a procession a league in length, and the very roofs, trees, and lamp-posts, were covered with people. The Church of Sainte-Geneviève was turned into a Pantheon for the Great Men of the Fatherland, *Aux Grands*

[4] *Journal de la Maladie et de la Mort d'Honoré-Gabriel Mirabeau.* Paris, 1791; p. 263.

Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante. It was midnight ere the ceremonies ended, and the mightiest man in France was left in the darkness and silence to his long repose. Of him, more than most men, it might well have been said, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." *Dormir* "To sleep," he wrote in his dying agony. Death had no terror for him; it was only the ringing down of the curtain at the end of the drama. From the womb of Nature he sprang, and like a tired child he fell asleep at last on her bosom.

ROBERT OWEN.

Robert Owen, whose name was once a terror to the clergy and the privileged classes, was born at Newtown, Montgomeryshire, on May 14, 1771. In his youth he noticed the inconsistency of professing Christians, and on studying the various religions of the world, as he tells us in his *Autobiography*, he found that "one and all had emanated from the same source, and their varieties from the same false imaginations of our early ancestors." We have no space to narrate his long life, his remarkable prosperity in cotton spinning, his experiments in the education of children, his disputes with the clergy, and his efforts at social reform, to which he devoted his time and wealth with singular disinterestedness and simplicity. At one time his influence even with the upper classes was remarkable, but he seriously impaired it in 1817, by honestly stating, at a great meeting at the City of London Tavern, that it was useless to hope for real reform, while people were besotted by "the gross errors that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion." After many more years of labor for the cause he loved, Owen quietly passed away on November 17, 1858, at the great age of eighty-eight. His last hours are described in the following letter by his son, Robert Dale Owen, which appeared in the newspapers of the time, and is preserved in Mr. G. J. Holyoake's *Last Days of Robert Owen.*

"NEWTOWN, NOVEMBER 17, 1858. My dear father passed away this morning, at a quarter before seven, and passed away as gently

and quietly as if he had fallen asleep. There was not the least struggle, not a contraction of a limb, of a muscle, not an expression of pain on his face. His breathing gradually became slower and slower, until at last it ceased so imperceptibly, that, even as I held his hand, I could scarcely tell the moment when he no longer breathed. His last words distinctly pronounced about twenty minutes before his death, were 'Relief has come.' About half an hour before he said 'Very easy and comfortable.'"

Owen's remains were interred in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Newtown, and as the law then stood, the minister had a right, which he exercised, of reading the Church of England burial service over the heretic's coffin, and the Freethinkers who stood round the grave had to bear the mockery as quietly as possible. In Owen's case, as in Carlile's, the Church appropriated the heretic's corpse. Even Darwin's body rests in Westminster Abbey, and that is all of him the Church can boast.

THOMAS PAINE.

George Washington has been called the hero of American Independence, but Thomas Paine shares with him the honor. The sword of the one, and the pen of the other, were both necessary in the conflict which prepared the ground for building the Republic of the United States. While the farmer-general fought with unabated hope in the darkest hours of misfortune, the soldier-author wrote the stirring appeals which kindled and sustained enthusiasm in the sacred cause of liberty. *Common Sense* was the precursor of the Declaration of Independence. *The Rights of Man*, subsequently written and published in England, advocated the same principles where they were equally required. Replied to by Government in a prosecution for treason, it brought the author so near to the gallows that he was only saved by flight. Learning afterwards that the Rights of Man can never be realised while the people are deluded and degraded by priestcraft and superstition, Paine attacked Christianity in *The Age of Reason*. That vigorous, logical, and witty volume has converted thousands of Christians to Freethought. It was answered by bishops, denounced by the

clergy, and prosecuted for blasphemy. But it was eagerly read in fields and workshops; brave men fought round it as a standard of freedom; and before the battle ended the face of society was changed.

Thomas Paine was born at Thetford, in Norfolk, on January 29, 1736. His scepticism began at the early age of eight, when he was shocked by a sermon on the Atonement, which represented God as killing his own son when he could not revenge himself in any other way. Becoming acquainted with Dr. Franklin in London, Paine took his advice and emigrated to America in the autumn of 1774. A few months later his *Common Sense* announced the advent of a masterly writer. More than a hundred thousand copies were sold, yet Paine lost money by the pamphlet, for he issued it, like all his other writings, at the lowest price that promised to cover expenses. Congress, in 1777, appointed him Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Eight years later it granted him three thousand dollars on account of his "early, unsolicited, and continued labors in explaining the principles of the late Revolution." In the same year the State of Pennsylvania presented him with £500, and the State of New York gave him three hundred acres of valuable land.

Returning to England in 1787, Paine devoted his abilities to engineering. He invented the arched iron bridge, and the first structure of that kind in the world, the cast-iron bridge over the Wear at Sunderland, was made from his model. Yet he appears to have derived no more profit from this than from his writings.

Burke's *Reflections* appeared in 1790. Paine lost no time in replying, and his *Rights of Man* were sold by the hundred thousand. The Government tried to suppress the work by bribery; and that failing, a prosecution was begun. Paine's defence was conducted by Erskine, but the jury returned a verdict of Guilty "without the trouble of deliberation." The intended victim of despotism was, however, beyond its reach. He had been elected by the departments of Calais and Versailles to sit in the National Assembly. A splendid reception awaited him at Calais, and his journey to Paris was marked by popular demonstrations. At the trial of Louis XVI., he spoke

and voted for banishment instead of execution. He was one of the Committee appointed to frame the Constitution of 1793, but in the close of that year, having become obnoxious to the Terrorists, he was deprived of his seat as "a foreigner," and imprisoned in the Luxembourg for no better reason. At the time of his arrest he had written the first part of the *Age of Reason*. While in prison he composed the second part, and as he expected every day to be guillotined, it was penned in the very presence of Death.

Liberated on the fall of Robespierre Paine returned to America; not, however, without great difficulty, for the British cruisers were ordered to intercept him. From 1802 till his death he wrote and published many pamphlets on religious and other topics, including the third part of the *Age of Reason*. His last years were full of pain, caused by an abscess in the side, which was brought on by his imprisonment in Paris. He expired, after intense suffering, on June 8, 1809, placidly and without a struggle.[5]

Paine's last hours were disturbed by pious visitors who wished to save his immortal soul from the wrath of God.

"One afternoon a very old lady, dressed in a large scarlet-hooded cloak, knocked at the door and inquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis, with whom Mr. Paine resided, told her he was asleep. 'I am very sorry,' she said, 'for that, for I want to see him particularly.' Thinking it a pity to make an old woman call twice, Mr. Jarvis took her into Mr. Paine's bedroom and awoke him. He rose upon one elbow; then, with an expression of eye that made the old woman stagger back a step or two, he asked 'What do you want?' 'Is your name Paine?' 'Yes.' 'Well then, I come from Almighty God to tell you, that if you do not repent of your sins, and believe in our blessed Savior Jesus Christ, you will be damned and—' 'Poh, poh, it is not true; you were not sent with any such impertinent message: Jarvis make her go away—pshaw! he would not send such a foolish ugly old woman about his messages: go away, go back, shut the door.'"[6]

Two weeks before his death, his conversion was attempted by two Christian ministers, the Rev. Mr. Milledollar and the Rev. Mr. Cunningham.

"The latter gentleman said, 'Mr. Paine, we visit you as friends and neighbors: you have now a full view of death, you cannot live

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[5] *Life of Thomas Paine.* By Clio Rickman. 1819. P. 187.

[6] Rickman, pp. 182—183.

long, and whoever does not believe in Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned.' 'Let me,' said Mr. Paine, 'have none of your popish stuff; get away with you, good morning, good morning.' The Rev. Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him, but he was interrupted in the same language. When they were gone he said to Mrs. Hedden, his housekeeper, 'do not let them come here again; they intrude upon me.' They soon renewed their visit, but Mrs. Hedden told them they could not be admitted, and that she thought the attempt useless, for if God did not change his mind, she was sure no human power could."[7]

Another of these busybodies was the Rev. Mr. Hargrove, a Swedenborgian or New Jerusalemite minister. This gentleman told Paine that his sect had found the key for interpreting the Scriptures, which had been lost for four thousand years. "Then," said Paine, "it must have been very rusty."

Even his medical attendant did not scruple to assist in this pious enterprise. Dr. Manley's letter to Cheetham, one of Paine's biographers, says that he visited the dying sceptic at midnight June 5-6, two days before he expired. After tormenting him with many questions, to which he made no answer, Dr. Manley proceeded as follows:

"Mr. Paine, you have not answered my questions: will you answer them? Allow me to ask again, do you believe, or—let me qualify the question—do you wish to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? After a pause of some minutes he answered, '*I have no wish to believe on that subject.*' I then left him, and know not whether he afterwards spoke to any person on the subject."

Sherwin confirms this statement. He prints a letter from Mr. Clark, who spoke to Dr. Manley on the subject. "I asked him plainly," says Mr. Clark, "Did Mr. Paine recant his religious sentiments? I would thank you for an explicit answer, sir. He said, '*No, he did not.*'"[8]

Mr. Willet Hicks, a Quaker gentleman who frequently called on Paine in his last illness, as a friend and not as a soul-snatcher, bears similar testimony. "In some serious conversation I had with him a short time before his death," said Mr. Hicks, "he said his sentiments respecting the Christian religion were precisely the same as they were when he wrote the *Age of Reason*."[9]

Lastly, we have the testimony of Cheetham himself, who

[7] Rickman, p. 184. [8] Sherwin's *Life of Paine*, p. 225.
[9] Cheetham's *Life of Paine*, p. 152.

was compelled to apologise for libelling Paine during his life, and whose biography of the great sceptic is a continuous libel. Even Cheetham is bound to admit that Paine "died as he had lived, an enemy to the Christian religion."

Notwithstanding this striking harmony of evidence as to Paine's dying in the principles of Freethought, the story of his "recantation" gradually developed, until at last it was told to the children in Sunday-schools, and even published by the Religious Tract Society. Nay, it is being circulated to this very day, as no less true than the gospel itself, although it was triumphantly exposed by William Cobbett over sixty years ago. "This is not a question of religion," said Cobbett, "it is a question of moral truth. Whether Mr. Paine's opinions were correct or erroneous, has nothing to do with this matter."

Cobbett investigated the libel on Paine on the very spot where it originated. Getting to the bottom of the matter, he found that the source of the mischief was Mary Hinsdale, who had formerly been a servant to Mr. Willet Hicks. This gentleman sent Paine many little delicacies in his last illness, and Mary Hinsdale conveyed them. According to her story, Paine made a recantation in her presence, and assured her that if ever the Devil had an agent on earth, he who wrote the *Age of Reason* was undoubtedly that person. When she was hunted out by Cobbett, however, "she shuffled, she evaded, she affected not to understand," and finally said she had "no recollection of any person or thing she saw at Thomas Paine's house." Cobbett's summary of the whole matter commends itself to every sensible reader.

"This is, I think, a pretty good instance of the lengths to which hypocrisy will go. The whole story, as far as it relates to recantation, . . . is a lie from beginning to end. Mr. Paine declares in his last Will that he retains all his publicly expressed opinions as to religion. His executors, and many other gentlemen of undoubted veracity, had the same declaration from his dying lips. Mr. Willet Hicks visited him to nearly the last. This gentleman says that there was no change of opinion intimated to *him;* and will any man believe that Paine would have withheld from Mr. Hicks that which he was so forward to communicate to Mr. Hicks's *servant girl?*" [1]

[1] *Republican*, February 13, 1824, Vol. IX., p. 221.

I have already said that the first part of the *Age of Reason* was entrusted to Joel Barlow when Paine was imprisoned at Paris, and the second part was written in gaol in the very presence of Death. Dr. Bond, an English surgeon, who was by no means friendly to Paine's opinions, visited him in the Luxembourg, and gave the following testimony:

"Mr. Paine, while hourly expecting to die, read to me parts of his *Age of Reason;* and every night when I left him to be separately locked up, and expected not to see him alive in the morning, he always expressed his firm belief in the principles of that book, and begged I would tell the world such were his dying opinions." [2]

Surely when a work was written in such circumstances, it is absurd to charge the author with recanting his opinions through fear of death. Citing once more the words of his enemy Cheetham, it is incontestible that Thomas Paine "died as he had lived, an enemy to the Christian religion."

One of Paine's intimate friends, Colonel Fellows, was met by Walt Whitman, the American poet, soon after 1840 in New York. Whitman became well acquainted with the Colonel, who was then about 78 years of age, and describes him as "a remarkably fine old man." From conversations with him, Whitman became convinced that Paine had been greatly calumniated. Thirty-five years later, addressing a meeting at Lincoln Hall, Philadelphia, on Sunday January 28, 1887, the democratic poet said: "Thomas Paine had a noble personality, as exhibited in presence, face, voice, dress, manner, and what may be called his atmosphere and magnetism, especially the later years of his life. I am sure of it. Of the foul and foolish fictions yet told about the circumstances of his decease, the absolute fact is that as he lived a good life, after its kind, he died calmly and philosophically, as became him." [3]

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[2] Rickman, p. 194.

[3] Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days in America* (English edition), p. 150.

COURTLANDT PALMER.

Courtlandt Palmer was born on March 25, 1843. He was of good family and independent fortune, which he taxed for the support of advanced causes. He was President of the Nineteenth Century Club in New York, established for the free discussion of "burning" questions in religion and philosophy. Among its members was the great Freethought orator, Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, whom Palmer desired to speak at his grave if the malady from which he suffered should prove fatal. Four months before his death, he addressed the following letter to Colonel Ingersoll:

"NEW YORK, March 16, 1888

"MY DEAR FRIEND: When after my life's fitful fever, I shall start upon the long sleep of death, I shall want T. B. Wakeman and you to say above my ashes the last good-bye words—he first, you second! Not more than fifteen minutes each.

"When I use the word 'ashes' I mean it literally, as I wish my remains to be cremated.

"If it be thought best to make my funeral a public one, I wish Siegfried's Funeral March performed. I shall write Mr. Walter Damrosch to this effect.

"I shall not be buried from any Christian church, nor do I wish any Christian hymn sung. Let one song be a pean of triumph.

"Yours very affectionately, COURTLANDT PALMER.

"To COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

"P.S.—I have shown this to my wife. C. PALMER."

Mrs. Palmer, however, did not quite share her husband's Agnosticism. She felt that it would be a relief to her if some liberal Christian minister said a few words over her husband's corpse. Out of tenderness for her feelings he consented to the proposal. Accordingly he wrote the following letter to Mr. Wakeman on the very day before his death:

"BRANDON, VT., July 22, 1888.

"DEAR WAKEMAN,—I should not wonder if, ere this reaches you, life's fitful fever over, I might be sleeping soundly the sleep that knows no waking, and that is so full of peace.

"I am suffering from an acute attack of peritonitis that began less than a week ago, and has kept me in fever and pain since then, relieved only by morphine.

"I shall send some memoranda to-morrow about my funeral, in ase a proposed operation, which the doctors deem necessary to

my recovery, should not terminate as they hope. My secretary has all of my writings.

"I think my little poems, called 'The Future' and 'The Newborn Soul,' had best be read at my funeral. From the latter, however, reject the more abstruse verses, in reading.

"Mrs. Palmer is very anxious to find some liberal theologian who will officiate with Ingersoll. In that case, probably you had best withdraw, because the most effective tribute I can receive anyhow is a short encomium as a Freethinker, and Ingersoll's eloquence will accomplish this better even than your knowledge and friendship. Please consult Mrs. Palmer, Mr. D. G. Thompson, and Col. Ingersoll about details of funeral.

"You and I have stood together many long years as religious co-believers in this world. And, with no knowledge of a life beyond the grave, I do not hesitate to affirm in the expected presence of death, that the Religion of Humanity is a faith to live and die by.

"I have asked Mrs. Palmer, in the settlement of my estate, to give to you five hundred (500) dollars as a contribution toward the publication of your works.

"As ever, your friend. COURTLANDT PALMER."[4]

The operation referred to in the letter was performed the next day. Palmer was perfectly cool and collected, saw to the arrangement of his papers and affairs, and gave minute directions as to his funeral. After making a few slight changes in his will, he bade all the members of his family an affectionate farewell. During the few minutes which elapsed before the operation began he conversed cheerfully with those who were present. "A man should believe," he said, "only what he can prove. He may have every hope, but he should only believe what he can prove. I don't say that there is not a heaven, but I don't know that there is. That is my belief." Finally he said:—"The general impression is that Freethinkers are afraid of death. I want you one and all to tell the whole world that you have seen a Freethinker die without the least fear of what the hereafter may be."

The operation was performed successfully, but Palmer succumbed to the shock, and sank steadily into unconsciousness and death. His funeral took place on July 26. The ceremonies were performed at his residence. Among the mourners were Freethinkers like Moncure Conway, Edgar Fawcett the poet, Judge Lachman, Professor Eckel, and Commissioner

[4] *Freethinkers' Magazine* (Buffalo, N.Y.), September 1888, p. 405.

Andrews. Macgrave Coxe played and sang the Hymn to the Evening Star from "Tannhäuser," and Colonel Ingersoll delivered a beautiful, pathetic address, which brought tears to the eyes of his listeners.

When the ceremony desired by Palmer was ended, the Rev. R. H. Newton performed a religious service on behalf of the wife and family; but he creditably refrained from any pious allusions to the dead Agnostic, and confined his brief address to a eulogy of Palmer's character. Miss Helen Gardener was indignant at this "mockery" and "insult," but apparently she was ignorant of the last letter to Mr. Wakeman. Palmer protected himself from slander and misrepresentation, and that being done, he gave his wife permission to arrange for what would be a solace to her grief.

Palmer being well known and respected in New York, the press was not silent on these matters. The following appeared in the *New York Graphic* of July 26:

"No candid man, whatever his religious belief, can read the account of Courtlandt Palmer's death without profound admiration for his lofty courage and consistency. He felt that he could not survive the operation which resulted in his death. With calmness and precision he arranged the details of his funeral services and settled his business affairs. Then, before the surgeons came, he discoursed upon those philosophical and Agnostic views which had long been his moral guide. His last words were these: 'The general impression is that Freethinkers are afraid of death. I want you one and all to tell the whole world that you have seen a Freethinker die without the least fear of what the hereafter may be.'

"Here was a death worthy of Socrates.

"Through some singular coincidence most of the stories that have been given to the world professing to relate the death-bed scenes of noted Freethinkers have told of their abject fear and their recantation of unorthodox views just before dissolution. Without questioning the veracity of these ecclesiastical legends, it is highly interesting to observe the peace and quietude possible to a soul conscious of no wrong intent and no base deed, although deprived of the consolations of religion. Courtlandt Palmer's death was certainly a magnificent vindication of his self-respect.

"Such an exhibition ought to make more tolerant men of all creeds. It shows that the human mind can overcome that instinctive fear of death common to all mortality, and die content without the aid of pious promises or immortal expectations. This man died as became a man, because he had lived as became one. Before

the mystery of death his trust in himself did not falter. He had done his best, and he left the rest to what might be forthcoming. Happiest of men are those whose religious convictions are unshakable and whose lives are ordered according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. To such the grave has no mystery. But even to those less happy, who see after this life only into the twilight of an unknown country, death need have no sting."

The *New York World* of July 27 contained a similar reference to Palmer's death; and the name of this journal is known throughout the world:

"The brave and even cheerful manner in which that pronounced Freethinker, Courtlandt Palmer, met his end cannot fail to attract attention.

"'The general impression is,' he said, just before submitting to the operation which he was assured would almost inevitably be fatal, 'that Freethinkers are afraid of death. I want you one and all to tell the whole world that you have seen a Freethinker die without the least fear of what the hereafter may be.' The doomed man conversed cheerfully with his friends, bade the members of his family an affectionate farewell, provided for the cremation of his remains, hummed a tune from 'Tannhäuser' which he asked should be sung at his funeral, and then faced what he believed to be an eternal sleep—like one

> Who wraps the drapery of his couch about him
> And lies down to pleasant dreams.

"It is not necessary to share Mr. Palmer's Agnosticism—for he only said, 'I don't know that there is not a heaven, but I don't know that there is'—to admire his philosophic courage in the face of death.

"His life had fitted him for the ordeal. A rich man, he sympathised with the poor and sought to ameliorate their condition. He felt deeply and thought strongly on social questions. If his theories were air castles he at least tried to materialise them. Like Abou Ben Adhem, he 'loved his fellow-men.'

"Colonel Ingersoll's eloquent tribute to his friend will rank high among the best specimens of mortuary eloquence."

Palmer's remains were taken to the Long Island depôt and transported to Fresh Pond, where they were cremated. The ashes were placed in an urn and interred in Greenwood Cemetery.

RABELAIS.

François Rabelais, "the grand jester of France," as Bacon calls him, was born at Chinon, in Touraine, in 1483, the same year in which Luther and Raphael saw the light. He joined

the Church and became a monk. His heretical humor brought him into trouble, and he was once rescued by a military friend from the *in pace*, a form of burying alive. But this did not damp his spirits, though it made him cautious; for he dreaded the idea of being burnt alive "like a herring," seeing that he was "dry enough already by nature." He veiled his profound wisdom with the jolliest buffoonery. On one occasion he printed *âme* (the soul) as *âne* (a jackass) several times, and said it was a printer's blunder! "Rabelais," says Coleridge, "had no mode of speaking the truth in those days but in such a form as this"; his buffoonery was "an amulet against the monks and bigots." Despite the plain language of *Pantagruel*, Coleridge maintained that "the morality of the work is of the most refined and exalted kind."[5] Elsewhere the same great poet and critic said, "I could write a treatise in proof and praise of the morality and moral elevation of Rabelais' work, which would make the church stare and the conventicle groan."[6] Coleridge, indeed, classed Rabelais "with the great creative minds of the world," with Shakespeare, Dante and Cervantes.

"Attempts have been made," says Mr. Walter Besant, "to prove that Rabelais was a Christian. To suppose this is, in my mind, not only seriously to misunderstand the spirit of his book, but that of his time."[7] The *curé* of Meudon sapped the Church with satire from within. But on February 19, 1552, he resigned his living at Meudon and Le Mans. Mr. Besant concludes that "the old man, now that life was drawing to its close, now that his friends were dead, dispersed, and in exile, discerned at last the wickedness of continuing to say masses, which were to him empty forms, in the cause of a Church which was full of absurdities and corruptions."[8]

Many of his friends had perished in prison or at the stake, but Rabelais died a natural death in his bed. His end came, it is said, on April 9, 1553, at a house in the Rue des Jardins, Paris. Many stories were told of his death-bed, and may be found in the bibliophile Jacob's (Paul Lacroix) introduction

[5] *Table Talk* (Bohn), p. 97.
[6] *Miscellanies, Æsthetic and Literary* (Bohn), p. 127.
[7] *Rabelais*, by Walter Besant, p. 186. [8] P. 46.

to the Charpentier edition of Rabelais' works. When he had received the extreme unction, he said aloud that they had greased his boots for the great journey. When the priest in attendance asked if he believed in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the holy wafer, he replied meekly : "I believe in it, and I rejoice therein; for I think I see my God as he was when he entered Jerusalem, triumphant and seated on an ass." Towards the end they put on his Benedictine robe; whereupon he punned upon a Psalm—*Beati qui moriunter in Domino.* A messenger from Cardinal du Bellay being brought to the bedside, he said in a feeble voice, "Tell monseigneur I am going to seek the great Perhaps." Gathering his strength for a last effort, he cried out in a burst of laughter, "Draw the curtain, the farce is over."

These stories may be partly apocryphal, yet, as Jacob remarks, they are "in keeping with the character of Rabelais and the spirit of his writings."

WINWOOD READE.

Winwood Reade, the African traveller and naturalist, was a nephew of Charles Reade, the famous novelist. His researches are frequently drawn upon in Darwin's *Descent of Man*, in the index of which his name may be distinguished Turning his attention to literature, he wrote the *Martyrdom of Man*, a most remarkable book, showing a perfect grasp of human evolution, and an absolute freedom from theology. This was followed by a Freethought novel, *The Outcast* Winwood Reade died on April 24, 1875. A prominent obituary notice appeared in the London *Daily Telegraph* on April 27, bearing unmistakeable evidence of having been written by Charles Reade. It says: "He wrote his last work, *The Outcast*, with the hand of death upon him. Two zealous friends carried him out to Wimbledon, and there, for a day or two, the air seemed to revive him; but on Friday night he began to sink, and on Saturday afternoon died in the arms of his beloved uncle, Mr. Charles Reade."

MADAME ROLAND.

Among the Girondists who perished in 1793 was Madame Roland. She was nourished on scepticism, complains Carlyle; but he allows her "as brave a heart as ever beat in woman's bosom." "Like a white Grecian statue," he says, "serenely complete, she shines in that black wreck of things." While in prison she bore herself with fortitude, writing her Memoirs, and addressing cheerful letters to her daughter, her husband, and her friends. Feeling that she was doomed, she determined to go before the Revolutionary Tribunal alone. M. Chaveau-Lagarde, a lawyer, wished to defend her, but she declined his services. "You would lose your life," she said, "without saving mine. I know my doom. To-morrow I shall cease to exist." On October 9 she was driven in the tumbril to the guillotine, clad in white, with her long black hair hanging down to her girdle. With her was a prisoner named Lamarche, whom she endeavored to cheer. She renounced her right to be executed first, so that her dejected companion might be spared the pain of seeing her blood. Samson would not consent to this. "Will you," she gaily asked, "refuse a lady her last request?" and he yielded. "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" she exclaimed, but she bowed before the statue nevertheless, knowing that Liberty was holy though worshipped mistakenly with cruel rites.

She said her husband would not survive her, and he did not. On learning her fate, he left the kind friends who were harboring him at Rouen, and the next day he was found dead at the foot of a tree on the road to Paris. He had thrust a cane-sword into his own heart. Beside him was a letter, in which he said that he "died, as he lived, virtuous and honest," refusing to "remain longer on an earth polluted with crimes." The most touching feature in the suicide of this stern Republican and Freethinker was the fact that by taking his own life, and anticipating the Tribunal, he secured his property to his daughter.

Authorities:

Carlyle, *French Revolution*, Bk. V., chap. ii.
Barrière, *Memoires Particuliers de Mme. Roland.*

GEORGE SAND.

George Sand was the pen-name of Amantine Lucile Aurore Dudnevant. Her maiden name was Dupin. She was born at Paris on July 5, 1804, and she died at Nohant on June 8, 1876, after establishing her fame as one of the finest of French prose writers. She believed in God, says Plauchat, but "certainly not in the vengeful and merciless God of the orthodox." Her last work was a critical notice of Rénan's *Dialogues et Fragments Philosophique* in *Le Temps*, only a month before her decease. Towards the end of May she took to her bed, from which she never rose again. She was suffering from internal paralysis, and medical skill was of no avail. On the 8th of June, at nine in the morning, she "expired in calmness and serenity."[9] Before the end she said: "It is death; I do not ask for it, but neither do I regret it."[1] George Sand's biographer in English, Bertha Thomas, writes:

"Up to the last hour she preserved consciousness and lucidity. The words, '*Ne touchez pas à la verdure*,' among the last that fell from her lips, were understood by her children, who knew her wish that the tree should be undisturbed under which in the village cemetery she was soon to find a resting-place." [2]

Such was the peaceful death of the great writer, whom Mrs. Browning hailed in two glorious sonnets as "large-brained woman and large-hearted man," and whom Flaubert himself addressed as "chère maître."

SCHILLER.

After Goethe, Schiller is the greatest of German poets. His principles were those of a Deist. Like Goethe, he had no belief in Christianity, and but little respect for it as a present-day religion. His best works were written during the last fifteen years of his life, every day of which brought its of load pain. He died on May 9, 1805, in his forty-sixth year, having been born on November 10, 1759. Carlyle writes:

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[9] Plauchat, *Galerie Contemporain*, Pt. II.

[1] *George Sand*, by Bertha Thomas, p. 245. [2] Ibid.

"The fiery canopy of physical suffering, which had bewildered and blinded his thinking faculties, was drawn aside; and the spirit of Schiller looked forth in its wonted serenity, once again before it passed away forever. After noon his delirium abated; about four o'clock he fell into a soft sleep, from which he ere long awoke in full possession of his senses. Restored to consciousness in that hour, when the soul is cut off from human help, and man must front the King of Terrors on his own strength, Schiller did not faint or fail in this his last and sharpest trial. Feeling that his end was come, he addressed himself to meet it as became him; not with affected carelessness or superstitious fear, but with the quiet unpretending manliness which had marked the tenor of his life. Of his friends and family he took a touching but a tranquil farewell: he ordered that his funeral should be private, without pomp or parade. Some one inquiring how he felt, he said "*Calmer and calmer;*" simple but memorable words, expressive of the mild heroism of the man. About six he sank into a deep sleep; once for a moment he looked up with a lively air, and said, '*Many things were growing plain and clear to him!*" Again he closed his eyes; and his sleep deepened and deepened, till it changed into the sleep from which there is no awakening; and all that remained of Schiller was a lifeless form, soon to be mingled with the clods of the valley."[3]

Schiller's scepticism, it may be added, appears in his correspondence with Goethe more than in any of his other writings.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

This glorious poet of Atheism and Republicanism was born at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex, on August 4, 1792. His whole life was a daring defiance of the tyranny of Custom. In 1811, when less than nineteen, he was expelled from Oxford University for writing *The Necessity of Atheism.* After writing *Queen Mab* and several political pamphlets, besides visiting Ireland to assist the cause of reform in that unhappy island, he was deprived of the guardianship of his two children by Lord Chancellor Eldon on account of his heresy. Leaving England, he went to Italy, where his principal poems were composed with remarkable rapidity during the few years of life left him. His death occurred on July 8, 1822. He was barely thirty, yet he had made for himself a deathless fame as the greatest lyrical poet in English literature.

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[3] *Life of Schiller*, by Thomas Carlyle, p. 166.

Shelley was drowned in a small yacht off Leghorn. The only other occupants of the boat were his friend Williams and a sailor lad, both of whom shared his fate. The squall which submerged them was too swift to allow of their taking proper measures for their safety. Shelley's body was recovered. In one pocket was a volume of Æschylus, in the other a copy of Keats's poems, doubled back as if hastily thrust away. He had evidently been reading "Isabella" and "Lamia," and the waves cut short his reading for ever. It was an ideal end, although so premature; for Shelley was fascinated by the sea, and always expresssed a preference for death by drowning. His remains were cremated on the sea-coast, in presence of Leigh Hunt, Trelawney, and Byron. Trelawney snatched the heart from the flames, and it is still preserved by Sir Percy Shelley. The ashes were coffered, and soon after buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, close by the *old* cemetery, where Keats was interred—a beautiful open space, covered in summer with violets and daisies, of which Shelley himself had written "It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." Trelawney planted six young cypresses and four laurels. On the tomb-stone was inscribed a Latin epitaph by Leigh Hunt, to which Trelawney added three lines from Shakespeare's *Tempest*, one of Shelley's favorite plays.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.
COR CORDIUM
Natus iv. Aug. MDCCXCII
Obit vii. Jul. MDCCCXXII

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

And there at Rome, shadowed by cypress and laurel covered with sweet flowers, and surrounded by the crumbling ruins of a dead empire, rests the heart of hearts.

Shelley's Atheism cannot be seriously disputed, and Trelawney makes a memorable protest against the foolish and futile attempts to explain it away.

"The principal fault I have to find is that the Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius

cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the very earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions. . . . A clergyman wrote in the visitors' book at the Mer de Glace, Chamouni, something to the following effect: 'No one can view this sublime scene, and deny the existence of God.' Under which Shelley, using a Greek phrase, wrote 'P. B. Shelley, Atheist,' thereby proclaiming his opinion to all the world. And he never regretted having done so."[4]

Trelawney's words should be printed on the forefront of Shelley's works, so that it might never be forgotten that "the poet of poets and purest of men" was an Atheist.

BENEDICT SPINOZA.

Benedict Spinoza (Baruch Despinosa) was born at Amsterdam on November 24, 1632. His father was one of the Jewish fugitives from Spain who settled in the Netherlands to escape the dreaded Inquisition. With a delicate constitution, and a mind more prone to study than amusement, the boy Spinoza gave himself to learning and meditation. He was soon compelled to break away from the belief of his family and his teachers; and after many vain admonitions, he was at length excommunicated, His anathema was pronounced in the synagogue on July 27, 1656. It was a frightful formula, cursing him by day and night, waking and sleeping, sitting and standing, and prohibiting every Jew from holding any communication with him, or approaching him within a distance of four cubits. Of course it involved his exile from home, and soon afterwards he narrowly escaped a fanatic's dagger.

The rest of Spinoza's life was almost entirely that of a scholar. He earned a scanty livelihood by polishing lenses, but his physical wants were few, and he subsisted on a few pence per day. His writings are such as the world will not willingly let die, and his *Ethics* places him on the loftiest heights of philosophy, where his equals and companions may be counted on the fingers of a single hand. Through Goethe and Heine, he has exercised a potent influence on German,

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Records of Byron and Shelley, Vol. I., pp. 243—245.

and therefore on European thought. His subtle Pantheism identifies God with Nature, and denies to deity all the attributes of personality.

His personal appearance is described by Colerus, the Dutch pastor, who some years after his death gathered all the information about him that could be procured. He was of middle height and slenderly built; with regular features, a broad and high forehead, large dark lustrous eyes, full dark eyebrows, and long curling hair of the same hue. His character was worthy of his intellect. He made no enemies except by his opinions. "Even bitter opponents," as Dr. Martineau says, "could not but own that he was singularly blameless and unexacting, kindly and disinterested. Children, young men, servants, all who stood to him in any relation of dependence, seem to have felt the charm of his affability and sweetness of temper." [5]

Spinoza was lodging, at the time of his death, with a poor Dutch family at the Hague. They appear to have regarded him with veneration, and to have given him every attention. But the climate was too rigorous for his Southern temperament.

"The strict and sober regimen which was recommended by frugality was not unsuited to his delicate constitution; but, in spite of it, his emaciation increased; and, though he made no change in his habits, he became so far aware of his decline as on Sunday, the 20th of February, 1677, to send for his medical friend Meyer from Amsterdam. That afternoon Van der Spijck and his wife had been to church, in preparation for the Shrovetide communion next day: and on their return at 4 p.m., Spinoza had come downstairs and, whilst smoking his pipe, talked with them long about the sermon. He went early to bed; but was up again next morning (apparently before the arrival of Meyer), in time to come down and converse with his host and hostess before they went to church. The timely appearance of the physician enabled her to leave over the fire a fowl to be boiled for a basin of broth. This, as well as some of the bird itself, Spinoza took with a relish, on their return from church about midday. There was nothing to prevent the Van der Spijcks from going to the afternoon service. But on coming out of the church they were met by the startling news that at 3 p.m. Spinoza had died; no one being with him but his physician." [6]

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[5] *A Study of Spinoza.* By Dr. James Martineau, p. 104.
[6] Ibid, pp. 101, 102.

Dr. Martineau hints that perhaps "the philosopher and the physician had arranged together and carried out a method of euthanasia," but as he admits that "there is no tittle of evidence" for such a thing, it is difficult to understand why he makes such a gratuitous suggestion.

Pious people, who judged every philosopher to be an Atheist, reported that Spinoza had cried out several times in dying, "Oh God, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner!" Colerus investigated this story and found it an invention. Dr. Meyer was the only person with Spinoza when he died, so that it was impossible for the scandal-mongers to have heard his last words. Besides, his hostess denied the truth of all such statements, adding that "what persuaded her of the contrary was that, since he began to fail, he had always shown in his sufferings a stoical fortitude."[7]

DAVID FREDERICK STRAUSS.

Strauss's *Life of Jesus* once excited universal controversy in the Christian world, and the author's name was opprobrious in orthodox circles. So important was the work, that it was translated into French by Littré and into English by George Eliot. Subsequently, Strauss published a still more heterodox book, *The Old Faith and the New*, in which he asserts that "if we would speak as honest, upright men, we must acknowledge we are no longer Christians," and strenuously repudiates all the dogmas of theology as founded on ignorance and superstition.

This eminent German Freethinker died in the spring of 1874, of cancer in the stomach, one of the most excruciating disorders.

"But in these very sufferings the mental greatness and moral strength of the sufferer proclaimed their most glorious victory. He was fully aware of his condition. With unshaken firmness he adhered to the convictions which he had openly acknowledged in his last work [*The Old Faith and the New*] and he never for a moment repented having written them. But with these convic-

[7] *La Vie de Spinoza*, par Colerus: Saisset's *Œuvres de Spinoza*, Vol. II., p. xxxvii.

tions he met death with such repose and with such unclouded serenity of mind, that it was impossible to leave his sick room without the impression of a moral sanctity which we all the more surely receive from greatness of soul and mastery of mind over matter, the stronger are the hindrances in the surmounting of which it is manifested." [8]

Strauss left directions for his funeral. He expressly forbade all participation of the Church in the ceremony, but on the day of his interment a sum of money was to be given to the poor. "On February 10 [1874] therefore," says his biographer, "he was buried without ringing of bells or the presence of a clergyman, but in the most suitable manner, and amid the lively sympathy of all, far and near."

JOHN TOLAND.

Toland was one of the first to call himself a Freethinker. He was born at Redcastle, near Londonderry, in Ireland, on November 30, 1670; and he died at Putney on March 11, 1722. His famous work *Christianity not Mysterious* was brought before Parliament, condemned as heretical, and ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. One member proposed that the author himself should be burnt; and as Thomas Aitkenhead had been hung at Edinburgh for blasphemy in the previous year, it is obvious that Toland incurred great danger in publishing his views.

Among other writings, Toland's *Letters to Serena* achieved distinction. They were translated into French by the famous Baron D'Holbach, and Lange, in his great *History of Materialism*, says that "The second letter handles the kernel of the whole question of Materialism." Lange also says that "Toland is one of those benevolent beings who exhibit to us a great character in the complete harmony of all the sides of the human existence."

For some years before his death, Toland lived in obscure lodgings with a carpenter at Putney. His health was broken,

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[8] Edward Zeller, *David Frederick Strauss in his Life and Writings*, p. 148.

and his circumstances were poor. His last illness was painful, but he bore it with great fortitude. According to one of his most intimate friends, he looked earnestly at those in the room a few minutes before breathing his last, and on being asked if he wanted anything, he answered "I want nothing but death." His biographer, Des Maizeaux, says that "he looked upon death without the least perturbation of mind, bidding farewell to those that were about him, and telling them he was going to sleep."

LUCILIO VANINI.

Lucilio Vanini was born at Taurisano, near Naples, in 1584 or 1585. He studied theology, philosophy, physics, astronomy, medicine, and civil and ecclesiastical law. At Padua he became a doctor of canon and civil law, and was ordained a priest. Resolving to visit the academies of Europe, he travelled through France, England, Holland, and Germany. According to Fathers Mersenne and Garasse, he formed a project of promulgating Atheism over the whole of Europe. The same priests allege that he had fifty thousand Atheistic followers at Paris! One of his books was condemned to the flames by the Sorbonne. Vanini himself met eventually with the same fate. Tried at Toulouse for heresy, he was condemned as an Atheist, and sentenced to the stake. At the trial he protested his belief in God, and defended the existence of Deity with the flimsiest arguments; so flimsy, indeed, that one can scarcely read them, without suspecting that he was pouring irony on his judges. They ordered him to have his tongue cut out before being burnt alive. It is said that he afterwards confessed, took the communion, and declared himself ready to subscribe the tenets of the Church.

But if he did so, he certainly recovered his natural dignity when he had to face the worst. *Le Mercure Français*, which cannot be suspected of partiality towards him, reports that "he died with as much constancy, patience, and fortitude as any other man ever seen; for setting forth from the Conciergerie joyful and elate, he pronounced in Italian these

words—'Come, let us die cheerfully like a philosopher!'" There is a report that, on seeing the pile, he cried out "Ah, my God!" On which a bystander said, "You believe in God, then." "No," he retorted, "it's a fashion of speaking." Father Garasse says that he uttered many other notable blasphemies, refused to ask forgiveness of God, or of the king, and died furious and defiant. So obstinate was he, that pincers had to be employed to pluck out his tongue. President Gramond, author of the *History of France Under Louis XIII.*, writes: "I saw him in the tumbril as they led him to execution, mocking the Cordelier who had been sent to exhort him to repentance, and insulting our Savior by these impious words. '*He* sweated with fear and weakness, and I, I die undaunted.'"

Vanini's martyrdom took place at Toulouse on February 19, 1619. He was only thirty-four, an age, as Camille Desmoulins said, "fatal to revolutionists."

[The reader may consult M. X. Rousselot's *Œuvres Philosophique de Vanini*, Avec une Notice sur sa Vie et ses Ouvrages. Paris 1842.]

VOLNEY.

Constantine François de Chassebœuf, known in literature by the name of Volney, from which he took his title on becoming a peer of France, was born in February, 1757. He was a great traveller, and his visits to Oriental countries were described so graphically and philosophically, that Gibbon wished he might go over the whole world and record his experiences for the delight and edification of mankind. His Atheism was always unconcealed, and in his famous *Ruins of Empires* he always exhibits theology and priestcraft as the constant enemies of civilisation. His sceptical *History of Samuel*, which is sometimes wrongly ascribed to Voltaire, was written within a year of his death.

A very foolish story about Volney's "cowardice" in a storm is still circulated in pious tracts. It is said that he threw himself on the deck of the vessel, crying in agony, "Oh, my God, my God!" "There is a God, then, Monsieur

Volney?" said one of the passengers. "Oh, yes," he exclaimed, "there is, there is, Lord save me!" When the vessel arrived safely in port, goes the story, he "returned to his atheistical sentiments."

I have traced this nonsense back to the *Tract Magazine*, for July 1832, where it appears very much amplified, and in many respects different. It appears in a still different form in the eighth volume of the *Evangelical Magazine*. Beyond that it is lost in the obscurity which always surrounds the birth of these edifying fictions.

Volney died at Paris on April 25, 1820, leaving a large part of his fortune to be spent on prize essays on the subject of language. Adolphe Bossange, in a notice of the life and writings of Volney, prefixed to the 1838 (Paris) edition of his works, gives the following account of his last hours :—

"His health, which had always been delicate, became languid, and soon he felt his end was approaching. It was worthy of his life.

"'I know the custom of your profession,' he said to the doctor three days before he died; 'but I wish you not to play on my imagination like that of other patients. I do not fear death. Tell me frankly what you think of my condition, for I have arrangements to make.' The doctor seemed to hesitate. 'I know enough' said Volney, 'let them bring a notary.'

"He dictated his will with the utmost calmness; and not abandoning at the last moment the idea which had never ceased to occupy his mind during twenty-five years, and doubtless fearing that his labors would be brought to a cessation by his death, he devoted the sum of 24,000 francs to founding an annual prize for the best essay on the philosophical study of languages."

Volney's death in the principles which guided his laborious and useful life was so notorious that the Abbé Migne, in his great Catholic Dictionary, says, "It appears that in his last moments he refused the consolations of religion." [9]

VOLTAIRE.

François Marie Arouet, generally known by the name of Voltaire, was born at Chatenay on February 20, 1694. He died at Paris, on May 30, 1778. To write his life during those

[9] *Dictionnaire de Biographie Chretienne et Anti-Chretienne.*

eighty-three years would be to give the intellectual history of Europe.

While Voltaire was living at Ferney in 1768, he gave a curious exhibition of that profane sportiveness which was a strong element in his character. On Easter Sunday he took his secretary Wagnière with him to commune at the village church, and also "to lecture a little those scoundrels who steal continually." Apprised of Voltaire's sermon on theft, the Bishop of Anneci rebuked him, and finally "forbade every curate, priest, and monk of his diocese to confess, absolve or give the communion to the seigneur of Ferney, without his express orders, under pain of interdiction." With a wicked light in his eyes, Voltaire said he would commune in spite of the Bishop; nay, that the ceremony should be gone through in his chamber. Then ensued an exquisite comedy, which shakes one's sides even as described by the stolid Wagnière. Feigning a deadly sickness, Voltaire took to his bed. The surgeon, who found his pulse was excellent, was bamboozled into certifying that he was in danger of death. Then the priest was summoned to administer the last consolation. The poor devil at first objected, but Voltaire threatened him with legal proceedings for refusing to bring the sacrament to a dying man, who had never been excommunicated. This was accompanied with a grave declaration that M. de Voltaire "had never ceased to respect and to practise the Catholic religion." Eventually the priest came "half dead with fear." Voltaire demanded absolution at once, but the Capuchin pulled out of his pocket a profession of faith, drawn up by the Bishop, which Voltaire was required to sign. Then the comedy deepened. Voltaire kept demanding absolution, and the distracted priest kept presenting the document for his signature. At last the Lord of Ferney had his way. The priest gave him the wafer, and Voltaire declared, "Having my God in my mouth," that he forgave his enemies. Directly he left the room, Voltaire leapt briskly out of bed, where a minute before he seemed unable to move. "I have had a little trouble," he said to Wagnière, "with this comical genius of a Capuchin; but that was only for amusement, and to accomplish a good purpose. Let us take a turn in the garden.

I told you I would be confessed and commune in my bed, in spite of M. Biord."[1]

Voltaire treated Christianity so lightly that he confessed and took the sacrament for a joke. Is it wonderful if he did the same thing on his death-bed to secure the decent burial of his corpse? He remembered his own bitter sorrow and indignation, which he expressed in burning verse, when the remains of poor Adrienne Lecouvreur were refused sepulture because she died outside the pale of the Church. Fearing similar treatment himself, he arranged to cheat the Church again. By the agency of his nephew, the Abbé Mignot, the Abbé Gautier was brought to his bedside, and according to Condorcet he "confessed Voltaire, receiving from him a profession of faith, by which he declared that he died in the Catholic religion, wherein he was born."[2] This story is generally credited, but its truth is by no means indisputable; for in the Abbé Gautier's declaration to the Prior of the Abbey of Scellieres, where Voltaire's remains were interred, he says that when he visited M. de Voltaire, he found him "*unfit to be confessed.*"

The curate of St. Sulpice was annoyed at being forestalled by the Abbé Gautier, and as Voltaire was his parishioner, he demanded "a detailed profession of faith and a disavowal of all heretical doctrines." He paid the dying Freethinker many unwelcome visits, in the vain hope of obtaining a full recantation, which would be a fine feather in his hat. The last of these visits is thus described by Wagnière, who was an eye-witness to the scene. I take Carlyle's translation:

"Two days before that mournful death, M. l'Abbé Mignot, his nephew, went to seek the Curé of St. Sulpice and the Abbé Gauthier, and brought them into his uncle's sick room; who, on being informed that the Abbé Gauthier was there, 'Ah, well!' said he, 'give him my compliments and my thanks.' The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of St. Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of M. de Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ? The sick man pushed one of his hands against the Curé's *calotte* (coif), shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, 'Let me die in peace

[1] Parton's *Life of Voltaire*, Vol. II., pp. 410—415.
[2] Condorcet's *Vie de Voltaire*, p. 144.

(Laissez-moi mourir en paix).' The Curé seemingly considered his person soiled, and his coif dishonored, by the touch of the philosopher. He made the sick-nurse give him a little brushing, and then went out with the Abbé Gauthier." [3]

A further proof that Voltaire made no real recantation lies in the fact that the Bishop of Troyes sent a peremptory dispatch to the Prior of Scellieres, which lay in his diocese, forbidding him to inter the heretic's remains. The dispatch, however, arrived too late, and Voltaire's ashes remained there until 1791, when they were removed to Paris and placed in the Pantheon, by order of the National Assembly.

Voltaire's last moments are described by Wagnière. I again take Carlyle's translation.

"He expired about a quarter past eleven at night, *with the most perfect tranquility*, after having suffered the cruelest pains in consequence of those fatal drugs, which his own imprudence, and especially that of the persons who should have looked to it, made him swallow. Ten minutes before his last breath he took the hand of Morand, his valet-de-chambre, who was watching him; pressed it, and said, '*Adieu, mon cher Morand, je me meurs*'—'Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone.' These are the last words uttered by M. de Voltaire." [4]

Such are the facts of Voltaire's decease. He made no recantation, he refused to utter or sign a confession of faith, but with the connivance of his nephew, the Abbé Mignot, he tricked the Church into granting him a decent burial, not choosing to be flung into a ditch or buried like a dog. His heresy was never seriously questioned at the time, and the clergy actually clamored for the expulsion of the Prior who had allowed his body to be interred in a church vault.[5]

Many years afterwards the priests pretended that Voltaire died raving. They declared that Marshal Richelieu was horrified by the scene and obliged to leave the chamber. From France the pious concoction spread to England, until it was exposed by Sir Charles Morgan, who published the following extracts from a letter by Dr. Burard, who, as assistant physician, was constantly about Voltaire in his last moments:

"I feel happy in being able, while paying homage to truth, to

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[3] Carlyle's *Essays*, Vol. II. (People's Edition), p. 161.
[4] Carlyle, Vol. II., p. 160. [5] Parton, Vol. II., p. 165.

destroy the effects of the lying stories which have been told respecting the last moments of Mons. de Voltaire. I was, by office, one of those who were appointed to watch the whole progress of his illness, with M. M. Tronchin, Lorry, and Try, his medical attendants. I never left him for an instant during his last moments, and I can certify that we invariably observed in him the same strength of character, though his disease was necessarily attended with horrible pain. (Here follow the details of his case.) We positively forbade him to speak in order to prevent the increase of a spitting of blood, with which he was attacked; still he continued to communicate with us by means of little cards, on which he wrote his questions; we replied to him verbally, and if he was not satisfied, he always made his observations to us in writing. He therefore retained his faculties up to the last moment, and the fooleries which have been attributed to him are deserving of the greatest contempt. It could not even be said that such or such person had related any circumstance of his death, as being witness to it; for at the last, admission to his chamber was forbidden to any person. Those who came to obtain intelligence respecting the patient, waited in the saloon, and other apartments at hand. The proposition, therefore, which has been put in the mouth of Marshal Richelieu is as unfounded as the rest.

"Paris, April 3rd, 1819. (Signed) BURARD." [6]

Another slander appears to emanate from the Abbé Barruel, who was so well informed about Voltaire that he calls him "the dying Atheist," when, as all the world knows, he was a Deist.

"In his last illness he sent for Dr. Tronchin. When the Doctor came, he found Voltaire in the greatest agony, exclaiming with the utmost horror—'I am abandoned by God and man.' He then said, 'Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months' life.' The doctor answered, 'Sir, you cannot live six weeks.' Voltaire replied, 'Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me!' and soon after expired."

When the clergy are reduced to manufacture such contemptible rubbish as this, they must indeed be in great straits. It is flatly contradicted by the evidence of every contemporary of Voltaire.

My readers will, I think, be fully satisfied that Voltaire neither recanted nor died raving, but remained a sceptic to the last: passing away quietly, at a ripe old age, to "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns," and leaving behind him a name that brightens the track of time.

[6] *Philosophy of Morals*, by Sir Charles Morgan.

JAMES WATSON.

James Watson was one of the bravest heroes in the struggle for a free press. He was one of Richard Carlile's shopmen, and took his share of imprisonment when the Government tried to suppress Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* and several other Freethought publications. In fighting for the un stamped press, he was again imprisoned in 1833. As a publisher he was notorious for his editions of Paine, Mirabaud, Volney, Shelley, and Owen. He died on November 29, 1874, aged seventy-five, "passing away in his sleep, without a struggle, without a sigh." [7]

JOHN WATTS.

John Watts was at one time sub-editor of the *Reasoner*, and afterwards, for an interval, editor of the *National Reformer*. He was the author of several publications, including *Half Hours with Freethinkers* in collaboration with Charles Bradlaugh. His death took place on October 31, 1866, and the following account of it was written by Dr. George Sexton and published in the *National Reformer* of the following week.

"At about half-past seven in the evening he breathed his last, so gently that although I had one of his hands in mine, and his brother the other in his, the moment of his death passed almost unobserved by either of us. No groan, no sigh, no pang indicated his departure. He died as a candle goes out when burned to the socket."

George Sexton has since turned Christian, at least by profession; but, after what he has written of the last moments of John Watts, he can scarcely pretend that unbelievers have any fear of death.

WOOLSTON.

Thomas Woolston was born at Northampton in 1669, and he died in London in 1733. He was educated at Sidney

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[7] *James Watson*, by W. J. Linton, p. 86.

College, Cambridge, taking his M.A. degree, and being elected a fellow. Afterwards he was deprived of his fellowship for heresy. Entering into holy orders, he closely studied divinity, and gained a reputation for scholarship, as well as for sobriety and benevolence. His profound knowledge of ecclesiastical history gave him a contempt for the Fathers, in attacking whom he reflected on the modern clergy. He maintained that miracles were incredible, and that all the supernatural stories of the New Testament must be regarded as figurative. For this he was prosecuted on a charge of blasphemy and profaneness, but the action dropped through the honorable intervention of Whiston. Subsequently he published *Six Discourses on Miracles*, which were dedicated to six bishops. In these the Church was assailed in homely language, and her doctrines were mercilessly ridiculed. Thirty thousand copies are said to have been sold. A fresh prosecution for blasphemy was commenced, the Attorney-General declaring the Discourses to be "the most blasphemous book that ever was published in any age whatever." Woolston ably defended himself, but he was found guilty, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Being too poor to pay the fine, Christian charity detained him permanently in the King's Bench Prison. With a noble courage he refused to purchase his release by promising to refrain from promulgating his views, and prison fever at length released him from his misery. The following account of his last moments is taken from the *Daily Courant* of Monday, January 29, 1733:—

"On Saturday night, about nine o'clock, died Mr. Woolston, author of the 'Discourses on our Savior's Miracles,' in the sixty-sixth year of his age. About five minutes before he died he uttered these words: 'This is a struggle which all men must go through, and which I bear not only with patience but willingness.' Upon which he closed his eyes, and shut his lips, with a seeming design to compose his face with decency, without the help of a friend's hand, and then he expired."

Without the help of a friend's hand! Helpless and friendless, pent in a prison cell, the brave old man faced Death in solitary grandeur, yielding, for the first and last time, to the lord of all.

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Erratum.—Pierre Bayle is wrongly printed as Henri Bayle on page 12.

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Gradually the Devil has dropped, until he has at last reached the lowest depth. He is now patronised by the Salvation Army. Booth exhibits him for a living, and all the Salvation Army Captains and Hallelujah Lasses parade him about to the terror of a few fools and the amusement of everyone else. Poor Devil! Belisarius begging an obolus was nothing to this. Surely the Lord himself might take pity on his old rival, and assist him out of this miserable plight.

Old Nick is now used to frighten children with, and by-and-bye he may be employed like the old garden-god to frighten away the crows. Even his scriptural reputation cannot save him from such a fate, for the Bible itself is falling into disbelief and contempt, and his adventures from Genesis to Revelation are become a subject of merriment. Talking to Mrs. Eve about apples in the form of a serpent; whispering in David's ear that a census would be a good thing, while Jehovah whispers a similar suggestion on the other side; asking Jesus to turn pebbles into penny loaves, lugging him through the air, perching him on a pinnacle, setting him on the top of a mountain whence both squinted round the globe, and playing for forty days and nights that preposterous pantomime of the temptation in the desert; getting miraculously multiplied, bewildering a herd of swine, and driving them into a watery grave; letting seven of himself occupy one lady called Magdalen, and others inhabit the bodies of lunatics; going about like a roaring lion, and then appearing in the new part of a dragon who lashes the stars with his tail; all these metamorphoses are ineffably ludicrous, and calculated to excite inextinguishable laughter. His one serious appearance in the history of Job is overwhelmed by this multitude of comic situations.

Poor Old Nick is on his last legs and cannot last much longer. May his end be peace! That is the least we can wish him. And when he is dead, let us hope he will receive a decent burial. Those to whom he has been the best friend should follow him to the

grave. His obsequies, in that case, would be graced by the presence of all the clergy, and the Burial Service might be read by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fancy them, burying their dear departed brother the Devil, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection!

FIRE!!!

Do not be alarmed, dear reader; there is no need to rush out into the street, like poor old Lot flying from the doomed Cities of the Plain. Sit down and take it easy. Let your fire-insurance policy slumber in its nest. Lean back in your chair, stretch out your legs, and prepare to receive another dose of Free-thought physic—worth a guinea a bottle. So! Are you ready? Very well then, let us begin.

What would man be without fire? Would he not be a perfect barbarian? His very food, even the meat, would have to be eaten raw, and as knives and forks would be unknown, it would have to be devoured with hands and teeth. We read that the Tartar horseman will put a beefsteak under his saddle, and supple and cook it in a ten-mile ride; but we cannot all follow his example, and many would think the game was not worth the candle. But not only should we be obliged to eat our food uncooked; we should enjoy none of the blessings and comforts bestowed upon us by science, which absolutely depends on fire. Nay, our houses would be too cold to shelter us in the winter, and we should be compelled to burrow in the

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FAMOUS FREETHINKER AND REPUBLICAN.

Mr. G. W. Foote, the famous Freethinker, died, after a seizure, on Sunday at his home at Westcliff-on-Sea. He was born nearly 67 years ago at Plymouth, and was prominently associated with most of the great Rationalist movements that arose on the ruins of Chartism.

Bradlaugh, whom he succeeded as editor of the "National Reformer" and as president of the National Secular Society, was an older man than Foote, and in some ways a greater; but these two great leaders of the Secularists in England (writes a correspondent) found a mutual affinity that was both of the head and of the heart.

In 1876 Foote, in company with the reformer and co-operator Holyoake, started the "Secularist"; and in 1881 he began the publication of the "Freethinker," which he continued to edit until the day of his death. In 1883 opened his first trial for blasphemy—at the instance of the Corporation of the City of London—and though the first jury disagreed and was discharged, the second found him guilty. He was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, which he served in Holloway Gaol.

In the meantime an earlier but similar charge was heard, though in this trial Foote's able defence earning for the prisoner the compliments of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, caused it to be dismissed.

As an advanced thinker, no less than as a scholar of ripe literary judgment and wide learning, Mr. Foote enjoyed the friendship of men like George Meredith, James Thomson, author of "The City of Dreadful Night," and in more recent days of Mr. Thomas Hardy. A posthumous work on Shakespeare, the manuscript of which his death left but half completed, may be expected to appear shortly.

There have been, in recent years, few men of such uncompromising honesty and candour of character; few men whose public utterance seemed anti-Christian to the point of intolerance, yet whose private actions were so tolerant, generous, and free from malice or personal ambition.

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FLOWERS

OF

FREETHOUGHT

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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1893.

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PREFACE.

HEINRICH HEINE called himself a soldier in the army of human liberation. It was a modest description of himself, for he was more; his position was that of a leader, and his sword was like the mystic Excalibur, flashing with the hues of his genius, and dealing death to the enemies of freedom.

Humbler fighters than Heine may count themselves as simple soldiers in that great army, whose leaders' names are graven deep in the history of modern Europe. I also venture to rank myself with them, and it is the summit of my ambition. To be indeed a soldier in that army, however low and obscure, is not to have lived in vain; to persevere, to fight to the end, is to live (if unknown) in the future of humanity.

In the course of my service to "the cause" I have wielded tongue and pen as weapons. The spoken word has gone, like spilt water, except as it may have made an impression on the listeners. The written word remains. Most of it, in truth, was only the week's work, done honestly, but under no special impulse. Some of the rest—as I have been told, and as in a few cases I feel—is of less doubtful value; having occasionally the merit of a free play of mind on subjects that are too often treated with ignorance, timidity, or hypocrisy.

This is my reason for publishing in a separate and durable form the articles in this collection. Whether

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it is a sufficient reason the reader will judge for himself.

No serious attempt has been made at classification. Here and there articles have been placed in intended proximity, though written at different intervals in the past ten years. Sometimes, for an obvious reason, the date of composition has been indicated. Otherwise there is no approach to systematic arrangement; and if this is a defect, the reader has on the other hand the benefit of variety.

The ambitious, and hardly execusable, thing about this collection is its title. But the selection of a label for such a miscellany was not an easy task, and I ask the reader's indulgence in consideration of the difficulty. The title I have chosen is at least a pretty one, and in a sense it is appropriate. These articles are flowers of *my* Freethought; the blossomings of my mind on particular occasions, after much investigation and pondering.

Wherever I have made a rash statement I shall be happy to be corrected; wherever I may have argued wrongly, I shall be happy to be set right. But I am less amenable to appeals on the ground of "taste." They are almost invariably made by those who wish failure to one's propaganda. A fair controversialist will refrain from personalities. I have done this, and I will do no more. I believe in free thought and honest speech. In the war of ideas there is neither treaty nor truce. To ask for quarter is to admit defeat; and to give it is treachery to Truth.

April, 1893. G. W. FOOTE.

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OLD NICK.

This gentleman is of very ancient descent. His lineage dwarfs that of the proudest nobles and kings. English peers whose ancestors came in with the Conqueror; the Guelphs, Hapsburgs, and Hohenzollerns of our European thrones; are things of yesterday compared with his Highness the Devil. The Cæsars themselves, the more ancient rulers of Assyria, and even the Pharaohs of the first dynasty, are modern beside him. His origin is lost in the impenetrable obscurity of primitive times. Nay, there have been sages who maintained his eternity, who made him coeval with God, and placed upon his head the crown of a divided sovereignty of the infinite universe.

But time and change are lords of all, and the most durable things come to an end. Celestial and infernal, like earthly, powers are subject to the law of decay. Mutability touches them with her dissolving wand, and strong necessity, the lord of gods and men, brings them to the inevitable stroke of Death. Senility falls on all beings and institutions—if they are allowed to perish naturally; and as our august Monarchy is the joke of wits, and our ancient House of Lords is an object of popular derision, so the high and mighty Devil in his palsied old age is the laughing-stock of those who once trembled at the sound of his name. They omit the lofty titles he was once addressed by, and fearless of his feeble thunders and lightnings, they familiarly style him Old Nick. Alas, how are the mighty fallen! The potentate who was more terrible than an army with banners is now the sport of children and a common figure in melodrama. Even the genius of Milton, Goethe, and Byron, has not been able to save him from this miserable fate.

When this sobriquet of Old Nick first came into use is unknown. Macaulay, in his essay on Machiavelli, says that "Out of his surname they have coined an epithet for a knave, and out of his Christian name a synonym for the Devil." A couplet from *Hudibras* is cited to support this view.

> Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick
> Tho' he gave his name to our Old Nick.

"But we believe," adds Macaulay, "there is a schism on this subject among the antiquaries." The learned Zachary Gray's edition of *Hudibras* shows that "our English writers, before Machiavel's time, used the word Old Nick very commonly to signify the Devil," and that "it came from our Saxon ancestors, who called him Old Nicka." No doubt Butler, whose learning was so great that he "knew everything," was well acquainted with this fact. He probably meant the couplet as a broad stroke of humor. But there was perhaps a chronological basis for the joke. Our Saxon ancestors did not speak of Old Nicka in a spirit of jest or levity. The bantering sense of our modern sobriquet for the Devil appears to have crept in during the decline of witchcraft. That frightful saturnalia of superstition was the Devil's heyday. He was almost omnipotent and omnipresent. But as witchcraft died out, partly through the growth of knowledge, and partly through sheer weariness on the part of its devotees, the Devil began to lose his power. His agency in human affairs was seen to be less potent than was imagined. People called him Old Nick playfully, as they might talk of a toothless old mastiff whose bark was worse than his bite. At length he was regarded as a perfect fraud, and his sobriquet took a tinge of contempt. He is now utterly played out except in church and chapel, where the sky-pilots still represent him as a roaring lion. Yet, as a curious relic of old times, it may be noted that in the law-courts, where conservatism reigns in the cumbrous wig on the judge's head, and in the

cumbrous phraseology of indictments, criminals are still charged with being instigated by the Devil. Nearly all the judges look upon this as so much nonsense, but occasionally there is a pious fossil who treats it seriously. We then hear a Judge North regret that a prisoner has devoted the abilities God gave him to the Devil's service, and give the renegade a year's leisure to reconsider which master he ought to serve.

During the witch mania the world was treated to a great deal of curious information about Old Nick. What Robert Burns says of him in *Tam O'Shanter* is only a faint reminiscence of the wealth of demonology which existed a few generations earlier. Old Nick used to appear at the witches' Sabbaths in the form of a goat, or a brawny black man, who courted all the pretty young witches and made them submit to his embraces. Some of these crazy creatures, under examination or torture, gave the most circumstantial accounts of their intercourse with Satan; their revelations being of such an obscene character that they must be left under the veil of a dead tongue. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that anything of the kind occurred. Religious hysteria and lubricity are closely allied, as every physician knows, and the filthy fancies of a lively witch deserve no more attention than those of many females in our lunatic asylums.

Behind these tales of the Devil there was the pagan tradition of Pan, whose upper part was that of a man and his lower part that of a goat. The devils of one religion are generally the gods of its predecessor; and the great Pan, whose myth is so beautifully expounded by Bacon, was degraded by Christianity into a fiend. Representing, as he did, the nature which Christianity trampled under foot, he became a fit incarnation of the Devil. The horns and hooves and the goat thighs were preserved; and the emblems of strength, fecundity and wisdom in the god became the emblems of bestiality and cunning in the demon.

Heine's magnificent *Gods in Exile* shows how the

deities of Olympus avenged themselves for this ill-treatment. They haunted the mountains and forests, beguiling knights and travellers from their allegiance to Christ. Venus wooed the men who were taught by an ascetic creed to despise sexual love; and Pan, appearing as the Devil, led the women a frightful dance to hell.

But as the Christian superstition declined, the gods of Paganism also disappeared. Their vengeance was completed, and they retired with the knowledge that the gods of Calvary were mortal like the gods of Olympus.

During the last two centuries the Devil has gradually become a subject for joking. In Shakespeare's plays he is still a serious personage, although we fancy that the mighty bard had no belief himself in any such being. But, as a dramatist, he was obliged to suit himself to the current fashion of thought, and he refers to the Devil when it serves his purpose just as he introduces ghosts and witches. His Satanic Majesty not being then a comic figure, he is spoken of or alluded to with gravity. Even when Macbeth flies at the messenger in a towering rage, and cries "the Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon," he does not lose his sense of the Devil's dignity. In Milton's great epic Satan is really the central figure, and he is always splendid and heroic. Shelley, in fact, complained in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound* that "the character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry, which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure." Goethe's Mephistopheles is less dignified than Milton's Satan, but he is full of energy and intellect, and if Faust eventually escapes from his clutches it is only by a miracle. At any rate, Mephistopheles is not an object of derision; on the contrary, the laugh is generally on his own side. Still, Goethe is playing with the Devil all the time. He does not believe in the actual existence of the Prince of Evil, but simply uses the familiar

old figure to work out a psychological drama. The same is true of Byron. Satan, in the *Vision of Judgment*, is a superb presence, moving with a princely splendor; but had it suited his purpose, Byron could have made him a very different character.

The Devil is, indeed, treated with much greater levity by Coleridge and Southey, and Shelley knocks him about a good deal in *Peter Bell the Third*—

> The Devil, I safely can aver,
> Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;
> Nor is he, as some sages swear,
> A spirit, neither here nor there,
> In nothing—yet in everything.
>
> He is—what we are! for sometimes
> The Devil is a gentleman;
> At others a bard bartering rhymes
> For sack; a statesman spinning crimes;
> A swindler, living as he can.

These and many other verses show what liberties Shelley took with the once formidable monarch of hell.

The Devil's treatment by the pulpiteers is instructive. Take up an old sermon and you will find the Devil all over it. The smell of brimstone is on every page, and you see the whisk of his tail as you turn the leaf. But things are changed now. Satan is no longer a person, except in the vulgar circles of sheer illiteracy, where the preacher is as great an ignoramus as his congregation. If you take up any reputable volume of sermons by a Church parson or a Dissenting minister, you find the Devil either takes a back seat or disappears altogether in a metaphysical cloud. None of these subtle resolvers of ancient riddles, however, approaches grand old Donne, who said in one of his fine discourses that "the Devil himself is only concentrated stupidity." What a magnificent flash of insight! Yes, the great enemy of mankind is stupidity; and, alas, against that, as Schiller said, the gods themselves fight in vain. Yet time fights against it, and time is greater than the gods; so there is hope after all.

Gradually the Devil has dropped, until he has at last reached the lowest depth. He is now patronised by the Salvation Army. Booth exhibits him for a living, and all the Salvation Army Captains and Hallelujah Lasses parade him about to the terror of a few fools and the amusement of everyone else. Poor Devil! Belisarius begging an obolus was nothing to this. Surely the Lord himself might take pity on his old rival, and assist him out of this miserable plight.

Old Nick is now used to frighten children with, and by-and-bye he may be employed like the old garden-god to frighten away the crows. Even his scriptural reputation cannot save him from such a fate, for the Bible itself is falling into disbelief and contempt, and his adventures from Genesis to Revelation are become a subject of merriment. Talking to Mrs. Eve about apples in the form of a serpent; whispering in David's ear that a census would be a good thing, while Jehovah whispers a similar suggestion on the other side; asking Jesus to turn pebbles into penny loaves, lugging him through the air, perching him on a pinnacle, setting him on the top of a mountain whence both squinted round the globe, and playing for forty days and nights that preposterous pantomime of the temptation in the desert; getting miraculously multiplied, bewildering a herd of swine, and driving them into a watery grave; letting seven of himself occupy one lady called Magdalen, and others inhabit the bodies of lunatics; going about like a roaring lion, and then appearing in the new part of a dragon who lashes the stars with his tail; all these metamorphoses are ineffably ludicrous, and calculated to excite inextinguishable laughter. His one serious appearance in the history of Job is overwhelmed by this multitude of comic situations.

Poor Old Nick is on his last legs and cannot last much longer. May his end be peace! That is the least we can wish him. And when he is dead, let us hope he will receive a decent burial. Those to whom he has been the best friend should follow him to the

grave. His obsequies, in that case, would be graced by the presence of all the clergy, and the Burial Service might be read by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fancy them, burying their dear departed brother the Devil, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection!

FIRE!!!

Do not be alarmed, dear reader; there is no need to rush out into the street, like poor old Lot flying from the doomed Cities of the Plain. Sit down and take it easy. Let your fire-insurance policy slumber in its nest. Lean back in your chair, stretch out your legs, and prepare to receive another dose of Free-thought physic—worth a guinea a bottle. So! Are you ready? Very well then, let us begin.

What would man be without fire? Would he not be a perfect barbarian? His very food, even the meat, would have to be eaten raw, and as knives and forks would be unknown, it would have to be devoured with hands and teeth. We read that the Tartar horseman will put a beefsteak under his saddle, and supple and cook it in a ten-mile ride; but we cannot all follow his example, and many would think the game was not worth the candle. But not only should we be obliged to eat our food uncooked; we should enjoy none of the blessings and comforts bestowed upon us by science, which absolutely depends on fire. Nay, our houses would be too cold to shelter us in the winter, and we should be compelled to burrow in the

ground. The whole human race would have to live in tropical countries; all the temperate regions would be deserted; and as it is in the temperate regions that civilisation reaches its highest and most permanent developments, the world would be reduced to a condition of barbarism if not of savagery.

No wonder, then, that this mighty civiliser has figured so extensively in legend and mythology. "Next to the worship of the sun," says Max Müller, "there is probably no religious worship so widely diffused as that of Fire." At bottom, indeed, the two were nearly identical. The flame of burning wood was felt to be akin to the rays of the sun, and its very upward motion seemed an aspiration to its source. Sun and fire alike gave warmth, which meant life and joy; without them there reigned sterility and death. Do we not still speak of the *sunshine* of prosperity, and of basking in the *rays* of fortune? Do we not still speak of the *fire* of life, of inspiration, of love, of heroism? And thus when the tide of our being is at the flood, we instinctively think of our father the Sun, in whom, far more than in invisible gods, we live and move—for we are all his children.

Like everything else in civilised existence, fire was a human discovery. But superstitious ages imagined that so precious a thing must have descended from above. Accordingly the Greeks (to take but one illustration) fabled that Prometheus stole Jove's fire from Heaven and gave it to mankind. And as the gods of early ages are not too friendly to human beings, it was also fabled that Prometheus incurred the fierce anger of Jove, who fastened him to a rock on Mount Caucasus, where he was blistered by day and frozen by night, while Jove's vulture everlastingly preyed upon his vitals.

The sun himself, in oriental countries, shining down implacably in times of prolonged drought, became a terrible demon, and as Baal or Moloch was worshipped

with cruel and bloody rites. The corruption of the best is the worst; beneficence changes to malignity. Thus fire, which is a splendid servant, is an awful master. The very wild beasts dread it. Famishing lions and tigers will not approach the camp-fire to seize their prey. Men have something of the same instinctive apprehension. How soon the nerves are disturbed by the smell of anything burning in the house. Raise the cry of "Fire!" in a crowded building, and at once the old savage bursts through the veneer of civilisation. It is helter-skelter, the Devil take the hindmost. The strong trample upon the weak. Men and women turn to devils. Even if the cry of "Fire!" be raised in a church—where a believer might wish to die, and where he might feel himself booked through to glory—there is just the same stampede. People who sit and listen complacently to the story of eternal roastings in an everlasting hell, will fight like maniacs to escape a singeing. Rather than go to heaven in a chariot of fire they will plod for half a century in this miserable vale of tears.

Man's dread of fire has been artfully seized upon by the priests. All over the world these gentlemen are in the same line of business—trading upon the credulous terrors of the multitude. They fill Hell with fire, because it frightens men easily, and the fuel costs nothing. If they had to find the fuel themselves Hell would be cold in twenty-four hours. "Flee from the wrath to come," they exclaim. "What is it?" ask the people. "Consuming fire," the priests exclaim, "nay, not consuming; you will burn in it without dying, without losing a particle of flesh, for ever and ever." Then the people want to get saved, and the priests issue insurance policies, which are rendered void by change of opinion or failure to pay the premium.

Buddhist pictures of hell teach the eye the same lesson that is taught the ear by Christian sermons.

There are the poor damned wretches rolling in the fire; there are the devils shovelling in fuel, and other devils with long toasting-forks thrusting back the victims that shove their noses out of the flames.

Wherever the priests retain their old power over the people's minds they still preach a hell of literal fire, and deliver twenty sermons on Hades to one on Paradise. Hell, in fact, is always as hot as the people will stand it. The priests reduce the temperature with natural reluctance. Every degree lost is a sinking of their power and profit.

Even in England—the land of Shakespeare and Shelley, Newton and Darwin, Mill and Spencer—the cry of "Fire!" is still raised in thousands of pulpits. Catholics bate no jot of their fiery damnation; Church of England clergymen hold forth on brimstone—with now and then a dash of treacle—in the rural districts and small towns; it is not long since the Wesleyans turned out a minister who was not cocksure about everlasting torment; Mr. Spurgeon preaches hell (hot, without sugar) in mercy to perishing souls; and General Booth, who caters for the silliest and most ignorant Christians, works hell into his trade-mark.

"Blood and Fire" is a splendid summary of the orthodox faith. All who would be saved must be washed in the Blood of the Lamb—a disgusting ablution! All who are not saved fall into the Fire. A blood-bath or a sulphur-bath is the only alternative.

Happily, however, the people are becoming more civilised and more humane. Science and popular education are working wonders. Reason, self-reliance, and sympathy are rapidly developing. The old primitive terrors are losing their hold upon us, and the callous dogmas of savage religion are growing impossible. Priests cannot frighten men who possess a high sense of human dignity; and the doctrine of an angry God, who will burn his own children in hell, is loathsome to those who will fight the flames and smoke of

a burning house to save the life of an unknown fellow creature.

How amusing, in these circumstances, are the wrigglings of the "advanced" Christians. Archdeacon Farrar, for instance, in despite of common sense and etymology, contends that "everlasting" fire only means "eternal" fire. What a comfort the distinction would be to a man in Hell! Away with such temporising! Let the ghastly old dogma be defied. Sensible people should simply laugh at the priests who still raise the cry of "Fire!"

SKY PILOTS.

THE authorship of the designation "sky pilot" is as unknown as that of the four gospels. Yet its origin is recent. It has only been in use for a few years, say ten, or at the outside twenty. Nobody knows, however, who was the first man from whose lips it fell. Probably he was an American, but his name and address are not ascertained. Surely this fact, which has thousands if not millions of parallels, should abate the impudence of religionists who ask "Who made the world?" when they do not know who made nine-tenths of the well-known things it contains.

Whatever its origin, the designation is a happy one. It fits like a glove. Repeat it to the first man you meet, and though he never heard it before, he will know that you mean a minister. For this very reason it makes the men of God angry. They feel insulted, and let you see it. They accuse you of calling them

names, and if you smile too sarcastically they will indulge in some well-selected Bible language themselves.

There are some trades that will not bear honest designations, and the minister's is one of them. Call him what you please, except what he is, and he is not disquieted. But call him "sky-pilot" and he starts up like Macbeth at the ghost of Banquo, exclaiming "Come in any other form but that!"

Go down to the seaside and look at one of those bluff, weather-beaten, honest fellows, who know all the rocks and shoals, and tides and channels, for miles around. Call one of them a "pilot," and he will not be offended. The term is legitimate. It exactly denotes his business. He is rather proud of it. His calling is honorable and useful. He pilots ships through uncertain and dangerous waters to their destination. He does his work, takes his pay, and feels satisfied; and if you cry "pilot!" he answers merrily with a "what cheer?"

But "sky" in front of "pilot" makes all the difference. It makes the man of God feel like having a cold shower bath; then the reaction sets in and he grows hot—sometimes as hot as H——well, Hades. We are not going to swear if the parson does.

But after all, he *is* a "pilot" and a "sky" pilot. He undertakes to pilot people to Heaven. Let him board your ship and take the helm, and he will guide you over the Black Sea of Death to Port Felicity. That, at least, is what he says in his trade circular, though it turns out very differently in practice, as we shall see presently.

Let us first notice a great difference between the sea pilot and the sky pilot. The honest salt boards the ship, and takes her out to sea, or brings her into port. When the work is over he presents his bill, or it is done for him. He does not ask for payment in advance. He neither takes nor gives credit. But the sky pilot does take credit and he gives none. He is

always paid beforehand. Every year he expects a good retaining fee in the shape of a stipend or a benefice, or a good percentage of the pew rents and collections. But when his services are really wanted he leaves you in the lurch. You do not need a pilot to Heaven until you come to die. Then your voyage begins in real earnest. But the sky-pilot does not go with you. Oh dear no! That is no part of *his* bargain. "Ah my friend," he says, "I must leave you now. You must do the rest for yourself. I have coached you for years in celestial navigation; if you remember my lessons you will have a prosperous voyage. Good day, dear friend. I'm going to see another customer. But we shall meet again."

Now this is not a fair contract. It is really obtaining money under false pretences. The sky pilot has never been to Heaven himself. He does not know the way. Anyhow, there are hundreds of different routes, and they cannot all lead to the same place. Certainly they all start from this world, but that is all they have in common, and where they end is a puzzle. To pay money in such circumstances is foolish and an encouragement to fraud. The best way to pay for goods is on delivery; in the same way the sky pilot should be paid at the finish.

But how is that to be done? Well, easily. All you have to do is to address the sky pilot in this fashion —"Dearly beloved pilot to the land of bliss! let our contract be fair and mutual. Give me credit as I give you credit. Don't ask for cash on account. I'll pay at the finish. Your directions may be sound; they ought to be, for you are very dogmatic. Still, there is room for doubt, and I don't want to be diddled. You tell me to follow your rules of celestial navigation. Well, I will. You say we shall meet at Port Felicity. Well, I hope so; and when we do meet I'll square up."

Of course, it may be objected that this would starve the sky pilots. But why should it do anything of the kind? Have *they* no faith? Must all the faith be

on *our* side? Should they not practise a little of what they preach? God tells them to *pray* for their daily bread, and no doubt he would add some cheese and butter. All they have to do is to *ask* for it. "Ask and ye shall receive," says the text, and it has many confirmations. For forty years the Jews were among the unemployed, and Jehovah sent them food daily. "He rained down bread from heaven." The prophet Elijah, also, lived in the wilderness on the sandwiches God sent him—bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening. There was likewise the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of flour, which supported her and the man of God day by day without diminishing. These things actually happened. They are as true as the Bible. And they may happen again. At any rate they *should* happen. The sky-pilots should subsist on the fruits of prayer. Let them live by faith—not *our* faith, but *their* own. This will prove their sincerity, and give us some trust in their teaching. And if they *should* starve in the experiment—well, it is worth making, and they will fall martyrs to truth and human happiness. *One* batch of martyrs will suffice. There will be no need of what Gibbon calls "an annual consumption."

The men of God pilot *us* to Heaven, but they are very loth to go there themselves. Heaven is their "home," but they prefer exile, even in this miserable vale of tears. When they fall ill, they do not welcome it as a call from the Father. They do not sing "Nearer my God to thee." We do not find them going about saying "I shall be home shortly." Oh no! They indulge freely in self-pity. Like a limpet to a rock do they cling to this wretched, sinful world. Congregations are asked if they cannot "do something," a subscription is got up, and the man of God rushes off to the seaside, where prayer, in co-operation with oxygen and ozone, restore him to health, enable him to dodge "going home," and qualify him for another term of penal servitude on earth.

It appears to us that sky pilots, like other men, should be judged by their practice. If they show no belief in what they preach, we are foolish to believe in it any more than they do. It also appears to us that their profession is as fraudulent as fortune-telling. Many a poor old woman has been imprisoned for taking sixpence from a servant girl, after promising her a tall, dark husband and eight fine children; but men dressed in black coats and white chokers are allowed to take money for promises of good fortune in the "beautiful land above." It further appears to us that the sky pilots should be compelled to come to a reasonable agreement before their trade is licensed. They should settle *where Heaven is* before they begin business. Better still, perhaps, every applicant for a license should prove that *some* human soul *has been* piloted to Heaven. Until that is done, the profession is only robbery and imposture.

DEVIL DODGERS.

MOST people suppose this phrase to be a recent Americanism. It occurs, however, in the Memoirs of James Lackington, published in 1791. Speaking of certain ranting preachers, he says—"These *devil-dodgers* happened to be so very powerful that they soon sent John home, crying out, that he should be damned."

Admitting the age of the phrase, some will ask, Is it respectable? Well, that is a matter of taste. Is there any standard of respectability? Does it not

vary with time, place, and circumstance? Some people hate wearing gloves, while other people feel half naked without them. A box hat is a great sign of respectability; when a vestryman wears one he overawes philosophers; yet some men would as soon wear the helmet of Don Quixote. Flannel suits are quite shocking in town; at the seaside they are the height of fashion. And as it is with dress so it is with speech. The "respectable" classes are apt to rob language of its savor, clipping and trimming it like the trees in a Dutch garden. You must go to the common, unrespectable classes for racy vigor of tongue. They avoid circumlocutions, eschew diffuseness, go straight to the point, and prefer concrete to abstract expressions. They don't speak of a foolish man, they call him a fool; a cowardly talebearer they call a sneak; and so on to the end of the chapter. But is this really vulgar? Open your Shakespeare, or any other dramatic poet, and you will find it is not so. A look, a gesture, is more expressive than words; and concrete language carries more weight than the biggest abstractions.

Let us break up the phrase, and see where the "vulgarity" comes in. There is nothing vulgar about the Devil. He is reputed to be a highly-accomplished gentleman. Milton, Goethe, and Byron have even felt his grandeur. And is not "dodger" clear as well as expressive? David dodged Saul's javelin. That was smart and proper. Afterwards he attempted a dodge on Uriah. That was mean and dirty. So that "dodge" may be good, bad, or indifferent, like "man" or "woman." There is nothing objectionable about it *per se*. And if "devil" and "dodger" are respectable in their single state, how do they become vulgar when they are married?

Of course it is quite natural for the clergy and their thorough-paced dupes to cry out against plain language. The clerical trade is founded on mystery, and "behind every mystery there is a cheat." Calling things by their right names will always be ugly to impostors.

"Reverend" sounds so much nicer than "mystery-man," "priest" is more dignified than "fortune-teller," "clergyman" is pleasanter than "sky-pilot," and "minister" is more soothing than "devil-dodger." But plain speech is always wholesome if you keep within the bounds of truth. It does us good to see ourselves occasionally as others see us. And if this article should fall under the eyes of a Christian man of God, we beg him to keep his temper and read on to the end.

We tell the men of God, of every denomination, that they are Devil Dodgers, and when they cease to be that their occupation is going. Old Nick, in some form or other, is the basis of every kind of Christianity. Indeed, the dread of evil, the terror of calamity, is at the bottom of all religion; while the science which gives us foresight and power, and enables us to protect ourselves and promote our comfort, is religion's deadliest enemy. Science wars against evil practically; religion wars against it theoretically. Science sees the material causes that are at work, and counteracts them; religion is too lazy and conceited to study the causes, it takes the evil in a lump, personifies it, and christens it "the Devil." Thus it keeps men off the real path of deliverance, and teaches them to fear the Bogie-Man, who is simply a phantom of superstition, and always vanishes at the first forward step of courage.

What is the Christian scheme in a nutshell? God made man perfect—though some people, after reading the life of Adam, say that God made him a perfect fool. This perfect man was tackled by the Devil, a sort of spiritual Pasteur, who inoculated him with sin, which was transmitted to his posterity as *original* sin. God desires man's welfare, but the Devil is too strong for Omnipotence. Jesus Christ steps in with the Holy Ghost and saves a few men and women, but the Devil bags all the rest, and Hell is thronged while Heaven is half empty; the one place having three families

on every flat, the other having leagues of spacious mansions "to let."

Now in every generation the Devil is after us. Without schools, or churches, or armies of professional helpers, or even so much as an occasional collection, he carries on single-handed a most successful business. The clergy tell us, as the Bible tells them, that he is monstrously able, active and enterprising; never overlooking a single customer, and delivering damnation at the door, and even carrying it upstairs, without charging for carriage or waiting for his bill. All that sort of thing he leaves to the opposition firm, whose agents are clamorous for payment, and contrive to accumulate immense sums of the filthy lucre which they affect to despise.

This accommodating fiend is the *bête noir* of the clergy. They are always on his track, or rather he is on theirs. They help us to dodge him, to get out of his way, to be from home when he calls, to escape his meshes, to frustrate his wiles, to save our souls alive-O. "Here you are," they say, "he's coming down the street. We are just running an escape party. If you want to keep out of Hell, come and join us. Don't ask questions. There's no time for that. Hurry up, or you'll be left behind." And when the party turns the corner the clergy say, "Ah, that was a narrow escape. Some of you had a very close shave." And the next morning a collector calls for a subscription for the gentleman who saved you from the Devil.

Nearly fifty thousand gentlemen are engaged in this line of business, to say nothing of the Salvation Army. Ffty thousand Devil Dodgers! And this in England alone. If we include Europe, America, South Africa, and Australia, there are hundreds of thousands of them, maintained at the expense of probably a hundred millions a year. Yet the Devil is not outwitted. Mr. Spurgeon says he is as successful as ever; and, to use Mr. Stead's expression, Spurgeon has "tips from God."

By their own confession, therefore, the Devil Dodgers

are perfectly useless. They take our money, but they do little else. Honesty would make them disband. But they will never do that. They will have to be cashiered, or starved out by cutting off the supplies. The real truth is, they never *were* useful. They were always parasites. They gained their livings by false pretences. They dodged an imaginary enemy. The Devil is played out in educated circles. Presently he will be laughed at by everybody. Then the people will dismiss the priests, and there will be and end of Devil Dodgers.

FIGHTING SPOOKS.

"SPOOKS" means ghosts, sprites, goblins, and other such phantasms. The word is not yet endenizened in England, but it will probably take out letters of naturalisation here, settle down, and become a very respectable member of the English vocabulary.

Twelve months ago I met an American in London, who told me that he was a Freethinker, but he did not trouble himself about Freethought. His mind was made up on the supernatural, and he did not care to spend his time in "fighting spooks." That is, being emancipated himself from supersitition, he was indifferent about the matter, although millions of his fellow men were still in bondage.

This American gentleman's remark shows how people can be misled by phrases. "Fighting spooks" is a pretty locution, and every Freethinker would admit that fighting spooks is a most unprofitable

business. But, in reality, it is not the aggressive Secularist or Atheist who fights these imaginary beings. He fights those who do fight them—which is a very different thing.

Let the priests and preachers of all religions and denominations cease abusing the callow mind of childhood; let them refrain from teaching their fanciful conjectures about "the unseen"; let them desist from peopling the air with the wild creations of their own lawless imagination; let them tell no more than they know, and confine their tongues within the strict limits of honest speech; let them do this, and Freethought will be happy to expire in the blaze of its triumph. There is no joy in fighting superstition, any more than there is joy in attacking disease. Each labor is beneficent and is attended by a *relative* satisfaction; but health is better than the best doctoring, and mental sanity than the subtlest cure.

The clergy are the fighters of spooks. They babble of gods, who get angry with us; of devils, who must be guarded against; of angels, who fly from heaven to earth, and earth to heaven; of saints, who can do us a good turn if they are properly supplicated. But the chief spooks are of course the devils, headed by *the* Devil, Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifer, Abaddon, the Serpent—in short, Old Nick. "We have an army of red coats," said old Fox, "to fight the French; and an army of black coats to fight the Devil—of whom he standeth not in awe."

Before the great procession of Humanity go the priests. "Hush!" they cry, "the hedges are full of devils. Softly, gently, beloved! Do not rush into unspeakable danger. We will bear the brunt of it, out of our fatherly affection for you. See, we stand in front, on the perilous edge of battle. We dare the demons who lie in wait to catch your immortal souls. We beat the bushes, and dislodge them from their hiding-places; strong not in our own strength, but in the grace of God. And behold they fly! Did you not

see them? Did you not perceive the flutter of their black wings? Did you not smell their sulphurous taint? Beloved, the road is now clear, the hedges are safe. Forward then! But forget not our loyal services. Remember, beloved, that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and—shell out!"

The services of the black-coats are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description. Let them live on *their own* faith, and trust to him who fed Elijah in the desert with sandwiches brought by ravens' beaks.

Clearly the belief in spooks is profitable to the clergy. Just as clearly it is expensive to the people. Whistling between the hedges is as good as keeping a parson. But that is not the priest's teaching. He says the spooks are real, and he is the only person to keep them off. Grant the first point, and the second is sure to follow. But *are* the spooks real? Can the clergy show a single live specimen? They cannot, and they know they cannot, either for love or money. Why then does the business hold out? Because an imaginary spook is as good as a real spook, if the clergy can twist and prejudice the youthful mind in their direction. If a showman never lifts the curtain, it does not matter whether he has anything or nothing on the other side.

The belief in spooks is more than profitable to the priests. It enervates and paralyses the human mind. It is the parent of all sorts of mischief. It is our worst inheritance from our savage progenitors. The black spirits that haunted the swamps and forests of primeval ages, and terrified the ape-man who lived in mystery and fear, are not suffered to depart with the ignorance that gave them birth. They are cultivated by priests, and used to overawe the cradles and schools of civilisation.

The Freethinker does not fight spooks. He would not waste an ounce of powder upon them. He fights the fighters of spooks. He assails the superstition on

which they flourish. He seeks to free the human mind from gratuitous fears. He dispels the shadows and deepens the sunshine of life.

Surely this is a good work. Whoever takes part in it is giving the race an unmixed blessing. War with the army of enslavement! Down with the seducers of childhood—the spiritual profligates who debauch the youthful mind! Banish them, with their spooks, from the school, the college, the court of justice, the hall of legislation! Let us train generations of sound minds in sound bodies, full of rich blood, and nervous energy, and frank inquiry, and dauntless courage, and starry hope; with faces that never pale at truth, hearts that hold no terms with falsehood, knees that never bend before power or mystery, heads that always keep a manly poise, and eyes that boldly challenge all things from height to depth.

DAMNED SINNERS.

"Thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling, as an undone helpless, damned sinner."

—JOHN WESLEY, Sermon on "Justification by Faith."

POLITE ears, which are often the longest, will be shocked at the title of this article. This is an age in which it is accounted vulgar to express plain doctrines in plain language. Spurgeon was the last doctor of a good old school. Their theology was hateful: an insult to man and a blasphemy against God—if such a being exists; but they did not beat about the bush, and if they thought you were booked for hell, as was most likely, they took care to let you know it. They

called a spade a spade, not a common implement of agricultural industry. They were steeped in Bible English, and did not scruple to use its striking substantives and adjectives. When they pronounced "hell" they aspirated the "h" and gave the full weight of the two "l's." "Damn" and "damnation' shot from their mouths full and round, like a cannon ball sped with a full blast of gunpowder.

But, alas, how are the mighty fallen! No longer do the men of God indulge in thunderous Saxon. They latinise their sermons and diminish the effect of terrible teaching. You shall hear them designate "hell" with twenty roundabout euphemisms, and spin "damnation" into "condemnation" and "damned" into "condemned," until it has not force enough to frighten a cat off a garden wall.

Let us not be blamed, however, if we emulate the plain speech of the honest old theologians, and of the English Bible which is still used in our public schools. We despise the hypocritical cry of "vulgar!" We are going to write, not on "condemned transgressors," but on "damned sinners." Yes, DAMNED SINNERS.

Now, beloved reader, it behoves us to define and distinguish, as well as amplify and expatiate. We must therefore separate the "damned" from the "sinners." Not indeed in fact, for they are inseparable, being in truth one and the same thing; for the adjective is the substantive, and the substantive is the adjective, and the "damned" are "sinners" and "sinners" are the "damned." The separation is merely *mental*, for reasons of *convenience;* just as we separate the inseparable, length from breadth, in our definition of a line. This is necessary to clear and coherent thought; man's mind being finite, and incapable of operating in all directions at once.

What then are *sinners?* A simple question, but not so easy to answer. *All* men are *sinners.* But what is a *man?* A featherless biped? So was the

plucked fowl of Diogenes. A man is—well a man; and a sinner is—well a sinner. And this is near enough for most people. But it does not satisfy a rational investigator, to say nothing of your born critic, who will go on splitting hairs till his head is as bare as a plate, and then borrow materials from his neighbor's cranium.

In ancient Egypt it was a sin to kill a cat; in England cats are slain in myriads without a tremor of compunction. Among the Jews it is a sin to eat pork, but an English humorist writes you a delicious essay on Roast Pig. Bigamy is a sin in the whole of Europe but the south-eastern corner, and there it is a virtue, sanctioned by the laws of religion. Marrying your deceased wife's sister is a sin in England; four thousand years ago, in another part of the world, it was no sin at all; in fact, a gentleman of remarkable piety, whom God is said to have loved, married his wife's sister without waiting for a funeral. Did not Jacob take Rachel and Leah together, and walk out with them, one on each arm?

Sin as a *fact* changes with time and place. Sin as an *idea* is disobedience to the law of God; that is, to the doctrines of religion; that is, to the teaching of priests. *Crime* is quite another thing. It is far less heinous, and far more easily forgiven. Of course crime and sin may overlap; they may often be the same thing practically; but this is an accident, for there are crimes that are no sins, and sins that are no crimes. It is a crime, but not a sin, to torture a heretic; it is a sin, but not a crime, to eat meat on a Friday.

A sinner is a person on bad terms with his God. But who, it may be asked, is on good terms with him? No one. According to Christianity, at any rate, we have all sinned; nay, we are all full of original sin; we derived it from our parents, who derived it from Adam, who caught it from Old Nick, who picked it up God knows where.

Now every sinner is a damned sinner. He may not

know it, but he is so; and the great John Wesley advises him to recognise it, and come as a "damned sinner" to God, to be sprinkled or washed with the blood of Christ.

What is *damned* then? We take it that "damned sinners," that is *all* sinners, are persons to whom God says "Damn you!" To whom does he say it? To all sinners; that is, to all men. And why does he say it? Because he is wroth with them. And why is he wroth with them? Because they are sinners. And why are they sinners? Because they are men. And why are they men? Because they cannot help it. They were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and in sin did their mothers conceive them.

Every Christian admits this — theoretically. He goes to church and confesses himself a "miserable sinner," but if you called him so as he came out of church he would call you something stronger.

A sinner may be damned here, apparently, without being damned hereafter. He is liable to hell until he dies, but after that event he is sometimes reprieved and sent to heaven. But the vast majority of the human race have no share in the atoning blood of Christ. They were "damned sinners" *in posse* before they were born, they are "damned sinners" *in esse* while they live, and they will be "damned sinners" for ever when they leap from this life into eternity, and

> join the immortal fry
> Of almost everybody born to die.

This is a very comfortable doctrine for the narrow, conceited, selfish elect. For other people—all the rest of us—it is calculated to provoke unparliamentary language. Why should God "damn" men? And how can men be "sinners"? Certainly they can sin against each other, because they can injure each other. But how can they sin against God? Can they injure him? He is unchangeable. Can they rob him? He is infinite. Can they deceive him? He is omniscient.

Can they limit his happiness? He is omnipotent. No, they *cannot* sin against him, but he *can* sin against them. And if he exists he *has* sinned against every one of them. Not one human being has ever been as strong, healthy, wise, noble, and happy as God might have made him. Nor is man indebted to God for his creation. There cannot be a debt where there is no contract. It is the creator and not the creature who is responsible, and the theological doctrine of responsibility is the truth turned upside down.

Suppose a man had the power of creating another thinking and feeling being. Suppose he could endow him with any qualities he chose. Suppose he created him sickly, foolish, and vicious. Would he not be responsible for the curse of that being's existence?

Man is what he is because he is. He is practically without choice. The cards are dealt out to him, and he must take them as they come. Is it just to damn him for holding a bad hand? Is it honest to give him hell for not winning the game?

Let us use for a moment the cant language of theology. Let us imagine the *vilest* of "damned sinners" in Gehenna. Does not every scientist, and every philosopher, know that the orb of his fate was predetermined? Would not that "lost soul" have the right to curse his maker? Might he not justly exclaim "I am holier than thou"?

Do not imagine, reader, that this new reading of the book of fate has no practical significance. When we get rid of the idea of "damned sinners," when we abolish the idea of "sin" altogether and its correlative "punishment," and learn to regard man as a complicated effect in a universe of causation, we shall bring wisdom and humanity into our treatment of the "criminal classes," we shall look upon them as moral lunatics and deal with them accordingly. And this spirit will extend itself to all human relations. It will make us less impatient and angry with each other. We shall see that "to know all is to pardon all." Thus

will the overthrow of theology be the preparation for a new moral development. Another link of the old serpent of superstition will be uncoiled from the life of humanity, leaving it freer to learn the splendid truth, taught by that divine man Socrates, that wisdom and virtue are one and indivisible.

WHERE IS HELL?

THIS is a question of great importance, or at least of very great interest. According to the Christian scheme of salvation, the vast majority of us will have to spend eternity in "sulphurous and tormenting flames," and we are naturally curious as to the situation of a place in which we shall experience such delightful sensations.

But there is hardly any subject on which we can obtain so little information. The clergy are becoming more and more reticent about it. What little they ever knew is being secreted in the depths of their inner consciousness. When they are pressed for particulars they look injured. Sometimes they piteously exclaim "Don't." At other times they wax wroth, and exclaim to the questioners about the situation of hell, "Wait till you get there."

Just as heaven used to be spoken of as "up above," hell was referred to as "down below." At one time, indeed, it was believed to be underground. Many dark caves were thought to lead to it, and some of them were called "Hell Mouth." Volcanoes were regarded as entrances to the fiery regions, and when

there was an eruption it was thought that hell was boiling over. Classic mythology, before the time of Christ, had its entrances to hell at Acherusia, in Bithynia; at Avernus, in Campania, where Ulysses began his journey to the grisly abodes; the Sibyl's cave at Cumæ, in Argolis; at Tænarus, in the southern Peloponnesus, where Hercules descended, and dragged Cerberus up to the daylight; and the cave of Trophonius, in Lebadea, not to mention a dozen less noted places.

The Bible always speaks of hell as "down," and the Apostles' Creed tells us that Christ "descended" into hell. Exercising his imagination on this basis, the learned Faber discovered that after the Second Advent the saints would dwell on the crust of the earth, a thousand miles thick, and the damned in a sea of liquid fire inside. Thus the saints would tread over the heads of sinners, and flowers would bloom over the lake of damnation.

Sir John Maundeville, a most engaging old liar, says he found a descent into hell "in a perilous vale" in Abyssinia. According to the Celtic legend of "St. Brandon's Voyage," hell was not "down below," but in the moon, where the saint found Judas Iscariot suffering incredible tortures, but let off every Sunday to enjoy himself and prepare for a fresh week's agony. That master of bathos, Martin Tupper, finds this idea very suitable. He apostrophises the moon as "the wakeful eye of hell." Bailey, the author of *Festus*, is somewhat vaguer. Hell, he says, is in a world which rolls thief-like round the universe, imperceptible to human eyes:

> a blind world, yet unlit by God,
> Rolling around the extremest edge of light,
> Where all things are disaster and decay.

Imaginations, of course, will differ. While Martin Tupper and other gentlemen look for hell in the direction of the moon, the Platonists, according to Macrobus, reckoned as the infernal regions the whole

space between the moon and the earth. Whiston thought the comet which appeared in his day was hell. An English clergyman, referred to by Alger, maintained that hell was in the sun, whose spots were gatherings of the damned.

The reader may take his choice, and it is a liberal one. He may regard hell as under the earth, or in the moon, or in the sun, or in a comet, or in some concealed body careering through infinite space. And if the choice does not satisfy him, he is perfectly free to set up a theory of his own.

Father Pinamonti is the author of a little book called *Hell Open to Christians*, which is stamped with the authority of the Catholic Church, and issued for the special edification of children. This book declares that hell is four thousand miles distant, but it does not indicate the direction. Anyhow, the distance is so small that the priests might easily set up communication with the place. But perhaps it only exists in the geography or astronomy of faith.

Father Pinamonti seems particularly well informed on this subject. He says the walls of hell are "more than four thousand miles thick." That is a great thickness. But is it quite as thick as the heads of the fools who believe it?

Our belief is that hell is far nearer than the clergy teach. Omar Khayyam, the grand old Persian poet, the "large infidel," as Tennyson calls him, wrote as follows—in the splendid rendering of Edward Fitzgerald:—

> I sent my soul through the invisible,
> Some letter of that after-life to spell,
> And by and bye my soul returned to me,
> And answered, I myself am heaven and hell.

Hell, like heaven, is within us, and about us in the hearts of our fellow-men. Yes, hell is on earth. Man's ignorance, superstition, stupidity, and selfishness, make a hell for him in this life. Let us cease, then, to dread the fabled hell of the priests, and set ourselves to the

task of abolishing the real hell of hunger, vice, and misery.

The very Churches are getting ashamed of their theological hell. They are becoming more and more secularised. They call on the disciples of Christ to remedy the evils of this life, and respond to the cry of the poor for a better share of the happiness of this world. Their methods are generally childish, for they overlook the causes of social evil, but it is gratifying to see them drifting from the old moorings, and little by little abandoning the old dogmas. Some of the clergy, like Archdeacon Farrar, go to the length of saying that "hell is not a place." Precisely so, and that is the teaching of Secularism.

SPURGEON AND HELL.

Charles Lamb was one of the best men that ever lived. He had his failings, but he never harmed anyone but himself. He was capable of astonishing generosity, and those acquainted with the inner tragedy of his life know that it was a long act of self-denial. He was also extremely modest but not utterly devoid of indignation; and if he could not denounce bitterly, he could speed a shaft of satire into the breast of wickedness or cruelty. On one occasion, in the days of his youth, he was justly annoyed by his friend Coleridge, whose character was very inferior to his own, though he always assumed a tone of moral superiority. Lamb was so

galled by Coleridge's air of virtue and piety, at a moment when the humorist was suffering terribly in consequence of his sister's calamity, that he sent the transcendental poet a list of stinging questions. One of them asked whether one of the seraphim could fall, and another whether a man might not be damned without knowing it.

This last question suggests itself in the case of Mr. Spurgeon. Mrs. Spurgeon, Dr. Pierson, and other of the great preacher's friends, are all assuring us that he is in glory. Writing seven days after his death, Mrs. Spurgeon said "he has now been a week in heaven." It is natural that she should think so, and we do not wish to rob her of any consolation, nor do we suppose that this article will ever come under her notice. But is it not just possible that Spurgeon has gone to hell? And why should not the question be raised? We mean no personal offence; we speak in the interest of justice and truth. Spurgeon was very glib in preaching about hell, and we do not know that he had a monopoly of that special line of business. He never blenched at the idea of millions of human beings writhing in everlasting torment; and why should it be blasphemy, or even incivility, to wonder if he himself has gone to perdition?

Predestination, as the Church of England article says, is wonderfully comforting to the elect; that is, to those who imagine themselves to be so. But what if they are mistaken? What if a man, yea a fancied saint, may be damned without knowing it? God Almighty has not published lists of the elect. Many a Calvinistic Pharisee is perhaps a self-elected saint after all, and at the finish of his journey may find that he has been walking in the wrong direction.

One of Spurgeon's rooted notions was that unbelievers were *sure* of hell. They bore the mark of predestinate damnation broad upon their foreheads. Now at the bottom this means that a man

may be damned for believing wrongly. But how can anyone be sure that Spurgeon was absolutely right? The Baptists are only one division of Christians. There are scores of other divisions. All cannot be right, and all may be wrong. Even if one is entirely right, how do we know it is the Baptists? According to the law of probabilities, Spurgeon was very likely in the wrong; and if wrong belief, however sincere, entails damnation, it is quite possible that at 11.5 p.m. on Sunday, January 31, Spurgeon entered Hell instead of Heaven.*

Far be it from us to wish a fellow creature in Hell, but there is always a certain pleasure in seeing the engineer hoist with his own petard. All tragedy has a touch of comedy. Fancy Spurgeon in Hades groaning "I sent other people here by the million, and here I am myself."

How would this be worse than the groan of any other lost soul? Few men are devils or angels. Most are neither black nor white, but grey. Between the best and vilest how much difference is there in the eye of infinite wisdom? And if God, the all-knowing and all-powerful, created men as they are, strong and weak, wise and foolish, good, bad, and indifferent; there is no more injustice in Spurgeon's burning in Hell than in the damnation of the worst wretch that ever cursed the world.

Spurgeon used to preach hell with a certain gusto. Here is a hot and strong passage from his sermon on the Resurrection of the Dead:

"When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to

* The next article will explain this matter.

travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament."

After preaching this awful doctrine a man should be ill for a fortnight. Would it not afflict a kind-hearted man unspeakably to think that millions of his fellow beings, or hundreds, or even one, would suffer such a terrible fate? Would it not impair his sleep, and fill his dreams with terror? But it did not have this effect on Spurgeon. After preaching hell in that way, and rolling damnation over his tongue as a dainty morsel, he went home, dined with a good appetite, drank his wine, and smoked his cigar.

There was not the slightest doubt in Spurgeon's mind as to the endless doom of the damned. Here is an extract from another sermon—

"Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God and it shall be written, 'For ever!' When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, 'For ever!' When they howl, echo cries, 'For ever!'

'For ever' is written on their racks,
'For ever' on their chains;
'For ever' burneth in the fire,
'For ever' ever reigns."

How bodies are to burn without consuming, how a fire could last for ever, or how a good God could roast his own children in it, are questions that Spurgeon did not stop to answer. He took the damnable doctrine of damnation as he found it. He knew it was relished by myriads of callous, foolish people; and it gave such a pungent flavor to a long sermon! His listeners were not terrified. Oh dear no! Smith, the Newington greengrocer, was not alarmed; he twirled his thumbs, and said to himself, "Spurgeon's in fine form this morning!"

Archdeacon Farrar protests against the notion of a fiery, everlasting hell as the result of fear, superstition, ignorance, hate, and slavish letter-worship. He declares

that he would resign all hope of immortality to save a single human soul from the hell of Mr. Spurgeon. But is not the hell of Mr. Spurgeon the hell of the New Testament? Does not Jesus speak of everlasting fire? Why seek to limit the duration of hell by some hocus-pocus of interpretation? It is idle to pretend that "everlasting" means something less than everlasting. If it means that in relation to hell it must also mean it in relation to heaven. Dr. Farrar cannot have two different meanings for the same word in the same verse; and should he ever go to hell (he will pardon us the supposition), how much consolation would he derive from knowing that his doom was not "everlasting" but only "eternal"? There was more honesty and straightforwardness in Mr. Spurgeon. He preached what the Bible taught him. He set forth a hateful creed in its true colors. His presentation of Christianity will continue to satisfy those who belong to the past, but it will drive many others out of the fold of faith into the broad pastures of Freethought.

IS SPURGEON IN HEAVEN?

When Mrs. Booth died, the wife of the famous "General," the "Army" reported her as "Promoted to Glory from Clacton-on-Sea." It was extremely funny. Clacton-on-Sea is such a prosaic anti-climax after Glory. One was reminded of Sir Horace Glendower Sprat. But the sense of humor is not acute in religious circles.

Mr. Spurgeon frequently gave expression to his dislike and mistrust of the antics of the Salvation Army. He was far from prim himself, but he held that if people were not "won over to Christ" by preaching, it was idle to bait the hook with mere sensationalism. Yet by a strange irony his closest friends, in announcing his death to his flock, actually improved on the extravagance of the Salvationists. Here is a copy of the telegram that was affixed to the rails of the Metropolitan Tabernacle the morning after his decease:

Mentone, 11.50.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London.

Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11.5 Sunday night.

HARRALD.

This Harrald was Mr. Spurgeon's private secretary, but he writes like the private secretary of God Almighty. A leading statesman once said he wished he was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay was cocksure of everything; but what was Macaulay's cocksureness to the cocksureness of Harrald? The gentleman could not have spoken with more assurance if he had been Saint Peter himself, and had opened the gate for Pastor Spurgeon.

We take it that Spurgeon expired at 11.5 on Sunday night. That is the *fact*. All the rest is conjecture.

How could his soul enter heaven at the very same moment? Is heaven in the atmosphere? He who asserts it is a very bold speculator. Is it out in the ether? If so, where? And how is it our telescopes cannot detect it? If heaven is a place, as it must be if it exists at all, it cannot very well be within the astronomical universe. Now the farthest stars are inconceivably remote. Our sun is more than 90,000,000 miles distant, and Sirius is more than 200,000 times farther off than the sun. There are stars so distant that their light takes more than a thousand years to

reach us, and light travels at the rate of nearly two hundred thousands miles per second!

It is difficult to imagine Spurgeon's soul travelling faster than that; and if heaven is somewhere out in the vast void, beyond the sweep of telescopes or the register of the camera, Spurgeon's soul has so far *not* "entered heaven" that its journey thither is only just begun. In another thousand years, perhaps, it will be nearing the pearly gates. *Perhaps*, we say; for heaven may be a million times further off, and Spurgeon's soul may pull the bell and rouse Saint Peter long after the earth is a frozen ball, and not only the human race but all life has disappeared from its surface. Nay, by the time he arrives, the earth may have gone to pot, and the whole solar system may have vanished from the map of the universe.

What a terrible journey! Is it worth travelling so far to enter the Bible heaven, and sing hymns with the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Besides, a poor soul might lose its way, and dash about the billion-billion-miled universe like a lunatic meteor.

It appears to us, also, that Mr. Harrald and the rest of Mr. Spurgeon's friends have forgotten his own teaching. He thoroughly believed in the bodily resurrection of the dead, and an ultimate day of judgment, when body and soul would join together, and share a common fate for eternity. How is this reconcileable with the notion that Spurgeon's soul "entered heaven at 11.5" on Sunday evening, the thirty-first of January, 1892? Is it credible that the good man went to the New Jerusalem, will stay there in perfect felicity until the day of judgment, and will then have to return to this world, rejoin his old body, and stand his trial at the great assize, with the possibility of having to shift his quarters afterwards? Would not this be extremely unjust, nay dreadfully cruel? And even if Spurgeon, as one of the "elect," only left heaven for form's sake at the day of judgment, to go through the farce of a predetermined trial, would it not be a gratuitous worry

to snatch him away from unspeakable bliss to witness the trial of the human species, and the damnation of at least nine-tenths of all that ever breathed?

As a matter of fact, the Christian Church has never been able to make up its mind about the state or position of the soul immediately after death. Only a few weeks ago we saw that Sir G. G. Stokes, unconsciously following in the wake of divines like Archbishop Whately, holds the view that the soul on leaving the body will lie in absolute unconsciousness until the day when it has to wake up and stand in the dock. The controversies on this subject are infinite, and all sorts of ideas have been maintained, but nothing has been authoritatively decided. Mr. Spurgeon's friends have simply *cut* the Gordian knot; that is, they are only dogmatising.

Laying all such subtle disputes aside, we should like Mr. Harrald to tell us how he knows that Spurgeon has gone, is going, or ever will go to heaven. What certainty can they have in the matter? Saint Paul himself alluded to the possibility of his being "a castaway." How can an inferior apostle be *sure* of the kingdom of heaven?

Saint Paul taught predestination, and so did Spurgeon. According to this doctrine, God knew beforehand the exact number of human beings that would live on this planet, though Omniscience itself must have been taxed to decide where the anthropoid exactly shaded off into the man. He also knew the exact number of the elect who would go to heaven, and the exact number of the reprobate who would go to hell. The tally was decided before the spirit of God brooded over the realm of Chaos and old Night. Every child born into the world bears the stamp of his destiny. But the stamp is secret. No one can detect it. Lists of saved and damned are not published. If they were, it would save us a lot of anxiety. Some would say, "I'm all right." Others would say, "I'm in for it; I'll keep cool while I can." But we must all die before

we ascertain our fate. We may feel confident of being in the right list, with the rest of the sheep; but confidence is not proof, and impressions are not facts. When we take the great leap we shall know. Until then no man has any certitude; not even the most pious Christian that ever rolled his eyes in prayer to his Maker, or whined out the confession of his contemptible sins. All are in the same perplexity, and Spurgeon was no exception to the rule.

When predestination was really believed, the friends of the greatest saint only *hoped* he had gone to heaven. When they are *sure* of it predestination is dead. Nay, hell itself is extinguished. Spurgeon's friends think he has gone to heaven because they feel he was too good to go to hell. They knew him personally, and it is hard to think that a man whose hand once lay in yours is howling in everlasting fire. Such exceptions prove a new rule. They show that the human heart has outgrown the horrible doctrine of future torment, that the human mind has outgrown foolish creeds, that man is better than his God.

GOD IN JAPAN.

JAPAN has just been visited by a terrible earthquake. Without a moment's warning it swept along, wrecking towns, killing people, and altering the very shape of mountains. A vast tidal wave also rushed against the coast and deluged whole tracts of low-lying country. It is estimated that 50,000 houses have been destroyed, and at least 5,000 men, women, and children. The first reports gave a total of 25,000

slain, but this is said to be an exaggeration. Nevertheless, as a hundred miles or so of railway is torn to pieces, and it is difficult to convey relief to the suffering survivors, the butcher's bill of this catastrophe may be doubled before the finish.

If earthquakes are the work of blind, unconscious Nature, it is idle to spend our breath in discussion or recrimination. Even regret is foolish. We have to take the world as we find it, with all its disadvantages, and make the best of a not too brilliant bargain. Instead of screaming we must study; instead of wailing we must reflect; and eventually, as we gain a deeper knowledge of the secrets of Nature, and a greater mastery over her forces, we shall be better able to foresee the approach of evil and to take precautionary measures against it.

But the standard teaching of England, to say nothing of less civilised nations, is not Naturalism but Theism. We are told that there is a God over all, and that he doeth all things well. On the practical side this deity is called Providence. It is Providence that sends fine weather, and Providence that sends bad weather; Providence that sends floods, and Providence that sends drought; Providence that favors us with a fine harvest, and Providence that blights the crops, reducing millions of people, as in Russia at this moment, to the most desperate shifts of self-preservation. It is Providence that saves Smith's precious life in a railway accident, and of course it is Providence that smashes poor Jones, Brown and Robinson.

Now it will be observed that the favorable or adverse policy of Providence is quite irrespective of human conduct. There is no moral discrimination. If Grace Darling and Jack the Ripper were travelling by the same train, and it met with an accident, everybody knows that their chances of death are precisely equal. If there were any difference it would be in favor of Jack, who seems very careful of his

own safety, and would probably take a seat in the least dangerous part of the train.

Some people, of course, and especially parsons, will contend that Providence does discriminate. They have already been heard to hint that the Russian famine is on account of the persecution of the Jews. But this act of brutality is the crime of the Government, and the famine falls upon multitudes of peasants who never saw a Jew in their lives. They have to suffer the pangs of hunger, but the Czar will not go without a single meal or a single bottle of champagne.

No doubt a pious idiot or two will go to the length of asserting or insinuating that the earthquake in Japan is a divine warning to the people, from the Mikado down to his meanest subject, that they are too slow in accepting Christianity. In fact there is a large collection of such pious idiots, only they are deterred by a wholesome fear of ridicule. Hundreds of thousands of people have seen Mr. Wilson Barrett in *Claudian*, without being in the least astonished that an earthquake, which ruins a whole city, should be got up for the hero's spiritual edification.

Let the pious idiots, however numerous, be swept aside, and let the Christian with a fair supply of brains in his skull consider Providence in the light of this earthquake. It is folly to pretend that the Japanese are particularly wicked at this moment. It is greater folly to pretend that the earthquake killed the most flagitious sinners. It slew like Jehovah's bandits in the land of Canaan, without regard to age, sex, or character. The terrible fact must be faced, that in a country not specially wicked, and in a portion of it not inhabited by select sinners, the Lord sent an earthquake to slay man, woman, and child, and if possible to "leave alive nothing that breatheth."

Lay your hand upon your heart, Christian, and honestly answer this question. Would you have

done this deed? Of course not. Your cheek flames at the thought. You would rush to save the victims. You would soothe the dying and reverently bury the dead. Why then do you worship a Moloch who laughs at the writhings of his victims and drinks their tears like wine? See, they are working and playing; they are at business and pleasure; one is toiling to support the loved ones at home; another is sitting with them in peace and joy; another is wooing the maiden who is dearer to him than life itself; another is pondering some benevolent project; another is planning a law or a poem that shall be a blessing and a delight to posterity. And lo the mandate of Moloch goes forth, and "his word shall not return unto him void." Swifter than thought calamity falls upon the gay and busy scene. Hearts that throbbed with joy now quiver with agony. The husband folds his wife in a last embrace. The mother gathers her children like Niobe. The lover clasps in the midst of horror the maiden no longer coy. Homes are shaken to dust, halls fall in ruins, the very temples of the gods are shattered. Brains are dashed out, blood flows in streams, limbs are twisted, bodies are pinned by falling masonry, cries of anguish pierce the air, groans follow, and lastly silence. Moloch then retires to his inmost sanctuary, filled and sated with death and pain.

Is it not better, Christian friend, to defy Moloch instead of worshipping him? Is it not still better to regard this deity as the creation of fanciful ignorance? Is not existence a terror if Providence may swoop upon us with inevitable talons and irresistible beak? And does not life become sweeter when we see no cruel intelligence behind the catastrophes of nature?

STANLEY ON PROVIDENCE.

Buckle, the historian of Civilisation, points out that superstition is most rampant where men are most oppressed by external nature. Wild and terrible surroundings breed fear and awe in the human mind. Those who lead adventurous lives are subject to the same law. Sailors, for instance, are proverbially superstitious, and military men are scarcely less so. The fighter is not always moral, but he is nearly always religious.

No one acquainted with this truth will be surprised at the piety of explorers. There is a striking exception in Sir Richard Burton, but we do not remember another. From the days of Mungo Park down to our own age, they have been remarkable for their religious temperaments. Had they remained at home, in quiet and safety, they might not have been conspicuous in this respect; but a life of constant adventure, of daily peril and hairbreadth escapes, developed their superstitious tendencies. It is so natural to feel our helplessness in solitude and danger, and perhaps in sickness. It is so easy to feel that our escape from a calamity that hemmed us in on every side was due to a providential hand.

Whether Stanley, who is now the cynosure of all eyes, began with any considerable stock of piety, is a question we have no means of determining; but we can quite understand how a very little would go a very long way in Africa, amid long and painful marches through unknown territory, the haunting peril of strange enemies, and the oppressive gloom of interminable forests. Indeed, if the great explorer had become as superstitious as the natives themselves, we could have forgiven it as a frailty incident to human nature

in such trying circumstances. But when he brings his mental weakness home with him, and addresses Englishmen in the language of ideas calculated for the latitude of equatorial Africa, it becomes necessary to utter a protest. Stanley has had a good spell of rest in Egypt, and plenty of time to get rid of the "creeps." He should, therefore, have returned to Europe clothed and in his right mind. But instead of this he deliberately sits down and writes the following rubbish for an American magazine, with one eye on God above and the other on a handsome cheque below:

"Constrained at the darkest hour humbly to confess that without God's help I was helpless, I vowed a vow in the forest solitudes that I would confess his aid before men. Silence, as of death, was round about me; it was midnight; I was weakened by illness, prostrated by fatigue, and wan with anxiety for my white and black companions, whose fate was a mystery. In this physical and mental distress I besought God to give me back my people. Nine hours later we were exulting with a rapturous joy. In full view of all was the crimson flag with the crescent, and beneath its waving folds was the long-lost rear column."

Danger and grief are apt to make us selfish, and no one would be hard on Stanley for showing weakness in such circumstances. But he rather glories in it. The danger is gone, and alas! the egotism remains. Others perished miserably, but he escaped. Omnipotence took care of him and let them go to the Devil. No doubt they prayed in their extremity as heartily as he did, but their prayers were unheard or neglected. Stanley was the lion of the party. Yes, and in parading his egotistic piety in this way, he is in danger of becoming a *lion comique*.

There is something absolutely farcical in Stanley's logic. While he was praying to God, millions of other persons were engaged in the same occupation. Agonised mothers were beseeching God to spare their dear children; wives were imploring him to restore the bread-winner of the family to health; entombed miners were praying in the dark depths of coalpits, and slowly

perishing of starvation; shipwrecked sailors were asking for the help that never came. Providence could not, apparently, take on too much business at once, and while Stanley's fate trembled in the balance the rest of mankind might shift for themselves.

But the farce does not end here. Stanley's attitude was much like Jacob's. That smooth-skinned and smooth-tongued patriarch said that if God would guarantee him a safe journey, feed him, clothe him, find him pocket money, and bring him safe back again —well, then the Lord should be his God. Stanley was not so exacting, but his attitude was similar. He asked God to give him back his people (a few short, killed or starved, did not matter), and promised in return to "confess his aid before men." Give me the solid pudding, he says, and I will give you the empty praise. And now he is safe back in Europe he fulfils his part of the contract, and goes about trumpeting the praise of Omnipotence; taking care, however, to get as much cash as possible for every note he blows on the instrument.

Even this does not end the farce. Stanley's piety runs away with his arithmetic. He reminds us of a Christian lady we heard of the other day. She prayed one night, on going to bed, for news from her daughter, and early the next morning a letter came bearing the Edinburgh post-mark. This was clearly an answer to her prayer. But a sceptical friend showed her that the letter must have been posted at Edinburgh before she prayed for it. Now Stanley reasons like that lady. Nine hours is no time in central Africa. The "long-lost rear column" must have been near, though invisible, when Stanley struck his little bargain with the Almighty. Had it been two or three hundred miles off, and miraculously transported, the hand of Providence would have been unmistakable; but in the circumstances its arrival was natural, and the miracle is obviously the creation of Stanley's heated brain. He was "weakened by illness" and "prostrated by

fatigue," and the absurdity was pardonable. We only protest against his playing the child when he is well and strong.

GONE TO GOD.

STANLEY, the African traveller, is a man of piety. He seems to be on pretty familiar terms with the "one above." During his last expedition to relieve Emin—a sceptical gentleman, who gets along with less bloodshed than Stanley—he was troubled with "traitors"; that is, black fellows who thought they had a better right in Africa than the intrusive whites, and acted upon that opinion. This put Stanley in a towering rage. He resolved to teach the "traitors" a lesson. One of them was solemnly tried—by his executioners, and sentenced to be hung. A rope was noosed round his neck, and he was taken under a tree, which was to be his gallows. The poor devil screamed for mercy, but Stanley bent his inexorable brows, and cried, "Send him to God!"

"We were troubled with no more traitors," says Stanley. Very likely. But the great man forgot to say what he meant by the exclamation, "Send him to God!" Did he mean "Send him to God for judgment?" If so, it was rather rough to hang the prisoner before his proper trial. Did he mean, "The fellow isn't fit for earth, so send him to heaven?" If so, it was a poor compliment to Paradise. Or did he simply use a pious, impressive form of speech to awe the spectators, and give them the notion that he had as much traffic with God as any African mystery-man or Mohammedan dervish?

The middle one of these three theories fits in best with the general sentiment, or at any rate the working sentiment, of Christian England. Some brutal, drunken, or passionate wretch commits a murder. He is carefully tried, solemnly sentenced, and religiously hanged. He is declared unfit to live on this planet. But he is still a likely candidate for heaven, which apparently yawns to receive all the refuse of earth. He is sedulously taken in hand by the gaol chaplain, or some other spiritual guide to glory, and is generally brought to a better frame of mind. Finally, he expresses sorrow for his position, forgives everybody he has ever injured, delivers himself of a good deal of highly edifying advice, and then swings from the gallows clean into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The grotesque absurdity of all this is enough to wrinkle the face of a cab horse. Society and the murderer are both playing the hypocrite, and of course Society is the worse of the two, for it is acting deliberately and methodically, while the poor devil about to be hung is like a hunted thing in a corner, up to any shift to ease his last moments and make peace with the powers of the life to come. Society says he has killed somebody, and he shall be killed; that he is not fit to live, but fit to die; that it must strangle him, and call him "brother" when the white cap is over his face, and God must save his soul; that he is too bad to dwell on earth, but it hopes to meet him in heaven.

Religion does not generate sense, logic, or humaneness in the mind of Society. Its effect on the doomed assassin is simply horrible. He is really a more satisfactory figure when committing the murder than when he is posing, and shuffling and twisting, and talking piously, and exhibiting the intense, unmitigated selfishness which is at the bottom of all religious sentiment. The essence of piety comes out in this tragi-comedy. Personal fear, personal hope, self, self, self, is the be-all and the end-all of this sorry exhibition.

A case in point has just occurred at Leeds. James Stockwell was hung there on Tuesday morning. While under sentence of death, the report says, he slept well and ate heartily, so that remorse does not appear to have injured his digestion or any other part of his physical apparatus. On learning that he would not be reprieved, and must die, he became very attentive to the chaplain's ministrations; in fact, he took to preaching himself, and wrote several letters to his relatives, giving them sound teetotal advice, and warning them against the evils of drink.

But the fellow lied all the time. His crime was particularly atrocious. He outraged a poor servant girl, sixteen years of age, and then cut her throat. He was himself thirty-two years of age, with a wife and one child, so that he had not even the miserable excuse of an unmated animal. A plea of insanity was put forward on his behalf, but it did not avail. When the wretched creature found he was not to be reprieved, and took kindly to the chaplain's religion, he started a fresh theory to cover his crime. He said he was drunk when he committed it. Now this was a lie. The porter's speech in *Macbeth* will explain our meaning. James Stockwell may have had a glass, but if he was really drunk, in the sense of not knowing what he was about, we believe it was simply impossible for him to make outrage the prelude to murder. If he had merely drunk enough to bring out the beast in him, without deranging the motor nerves, he was certainly not *drunk* in the proper sense of the word. He knew what he was doing, and both in the crime and in his flight he showed himself a perfect master of his actions.

Religion, therefore, did not "convict him of sin." It did not lay bare before him his awful wickedness. It simply made him hypocritical. It induced or permitted him to save his *amour propre* by a fresh falsehood.

James Stockwell's last letter from gaol was written the day before his execution. It was a comprehensive

epistle, addressed to his father and mother and brothers and sisters. "God" and "Christ" appear in it like an eruption. The writer quotes the soothing text, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." He was evidently familiar with Scripture, and thought this text especially applicable to himself. "Many a prayer," he says, "have I offered to God both on behalf of you and myself," and he winds up by "hoping to meet you all hereafter."

Not a word about his crime. Not a word about his injury to society. Not a word about the poor girl he outraged and murdered. James Stockwell had no thought for her or her relatives. He did not trouble about what had become of Kate Dennis. He was careless whether she was in heaven or hell. Not once, apparently, did it cross his mind that he had destroyed her young life after nameless horror; that he had killed her in the bloom of maidenhood; that at one fell swoop he had extinguished all that she might have been—perhaps a happy wife and mother, living to a white old age, with the prattle of grandchildren soothing her last steps to the grave. Such reflections do not occur to gentlemen who are anxious about their salvation, and in a hurry to get to heaven.

"I and mine"—my fate, my mother, my father, my sisters, my brothers—this was the sole concern of James Stockwell under the chaplain's ministrations. In this frame of mind, we presume, he has sailed to glory, and his family hope to meet him there snug in Abraham's bosom. Well, we don't. We hope to give the haunt of James Stockwell a wide berth. If he and others like him are in the upper circles, every decent person would rather be in the pit.

Let not the reader suppose that James Stockwell's case is uncommon. We have made a point of reading the letters of condemned murderers, and they all bear a family likeness. Religion simply stimulates and sanctifies selfishness. In selfishness it began and in

selfishness it ends. Extreme cases only show the principle in a glaring light; they do not alter it, and the light is the light of truth.

James Stockwell has gone to God. No doubt the chaplain of Leeds gaol feels sure of it. Probably the fellow's relatives are just as sure. But what of Kate Dennis. Is *she* with God? What an awful farce it would be if she were in hell. Perhaps she is. She had no time to prepare for death. She was cut off "in her sins." But her murderer had three weeks to prepare for his freehold in New Jerusalem. He qualified himself for a place with the sore-legged Lazarus. He dwells in the presence of the Lamb. He drinks of the river of life. He twangs his hallelujah harp and blows his hallelujah trumpet. Maybe he looks over the battlements and sees Kate Dennis in Hades. The murderer in heaven, and the victim in hell! Nay more. It has been held that the bliss of the saved will be heightened by witnessing the tortures of the damned. In that case Kate Dennis may burn to make James Stockwell's holiday. He will watch her writhings with more than the relish of a sportsman who has hooked a lusty trout. "Ha, ha," the worthy James may exclaim, "I tortured her before I killed her, and now I shall enjoy her tortures for ever."

THANK GOD.

THE peculiarly selfish character of religion is often exemplified, but we do not remember a better illustration than the one which recently occurred at Folkestone. The twenty-seven seamen who were rescued

from the *Benvenue* attended a thanksgiving service at the parish church, where the vicar delivered "a short address suitable to the occasion." Their captain and four of his crew were drowned, and the lucky survivors thanked the Lord for saving them, though he let the others perish in the yeasty waves.

We should like to see a copy of that vicar's suitable discourse. We suspect it would be an interesting study to a cynic. No doubt the man of God's chief motive was professional. The saving of those shipwrecked men was a splendid piece of work, but it required to be rounded off. It was not complete unless the parson blessed it and approved it with a text. He came in at the finish when the danger was all over, and gave the perfecting touch in the shape of a cheap benediction.

Probably the man of God put in a good word for Providence. The poor sailors had been snatched from the jaws of death; their minds were therefore in a state of agitation, and at the very best they are not a logical or reflective race of men. Very likely, therefore, they assented to the theory that they owed their deliverance to the blessing of God, but a little quiet thought about the matter would possibly make them see it in a different light.

The persons who visibly *did* save them from drowning were gallant lifeboat-men, who put their own lives in deadly peril, fighting the storm inch by inch in the hope of rescuing a number of unknown fellow creatures. All honor to *them!* We would sooner doff the hat to them than to any prince in Christendom. Some of them, perhaps, take a drop too much occasionally, and their language may often be more vigorous than polite. But all that is superficial. The real test of a man is what he will do when he is put to it. When those rough fellows saw a brave task before them, all the skin-deep blackguardism dropped away; the heroic came out in supreme majesty, and they were consecrated by it more truly than any smug priest at his

profitable altar. As they jumped into the boat they proved the nobility of human nature, and the damnable falsehood of the Christian doctrine of original sin.

What share Providence had in the matter is not very apparent. Strong arms and stout hearts were in the lifeboat, and that accounts for her reaching the wreck. Had the rowers the choice of a stimulus, we dare say they would have taken a swig of brandy in preference to any quantity of the Holy Spirit. What Providence *might* have done if he, she, or it was in the humor, was to keep the shipwrecked sailors safe until the lifeboat arrived. But this was *not* done. Those who were lashed to the rigging were saved, while the captain and four others, less fortunately situated, were lost. Where the *material* means were efficacious there was salvation, and where they failed there was disaster and death.

So much for the logical side of the matter. Now let us look at the moral side. Religion pretends to minister to the unselfish part of our nature. That is the theory, but how does it work out in practice? Thanking God for saving the survivors of a shipwreck implies that he could have saved those who perished. It also implies that he did not choose to do so. It further implies that the saved are more worthy, or more important, than the lost; at least, it implies that they are greater favorites in the "eye of heaven." Now this is a frightful piece of egotism, which everyone with a spark of manhood would be disgusted at if he saw it in its true colors.

Nor is this all. It is not even the worst. There is a viler aspect of this "thanksgiving" business. One man is saved in a disaster and another is killed. When the first realises his good luck he congratulates himself. This is natural and pardonable, but only for a moment. The least disinterestedness, the least sympathy, the least imagination, would make him think of his dead companion. "Did he suffer much, poor fellow? What will his wife do? How will his little ones get on

without a father? After all, mightn't it have been better if he had been spared instead of me? Who knows?"

If these reflections did not occur under the stimulated instinct of self-preservation it would be bad enough. How much worse when the survivor keeps up the selfish attitude in cold blood, and deliberately goes about thanking God for *his* preservation! Ordinary reason and humanity would cry shame on such egotism, but religion steps in and sanctifies it.

Some of these days an honest man will be provoked into a bit of good strong "blasphemy." When he hears a fellow thanking Providence for *his* safety, while others perished, this honest man will shrug his shoulders. And when the fellow cries "Bless God!" this honest man will exclaim "Damn God!"

No doubt the priests would burn that honest man alive if they had the power. But his logic and his feelings will be better than theirs. He will abhor selfishness even in the disguise of piety, and he will argue that if God is to be credited with the lives of those who are saved, he should also be debited with the lives of those who are lost. And how would the account stand then?

JUDGMENT DAY.

THE end of the world has been a fertile and profitable theme with pulpit mountebanks and pious adventurers. Ever since the primitive ages of Christianity it has served to frighten the credulous and feather the nests of their deceivers.

In the apostolic days the Second Coming of Christ

was generally and constantly expected. According to the twenty-fourth of Matthew, Jesus predicted that the end of all things would soon arrive. The sun and moon were to be darkened; the stars were to fall from heaven; and the Son of Man was to come through the clouds with great power and glory, and gather the elect together from every quarter of the earth. According to the twenty-fifth of Matthew, this wondrous scene was to be followed by a Great Assize. All the nations were to be judged before the heavenly throne, and divided into two lots, one destined for heaven and the other for hell. And Jesus significantly added, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

St. Paul also, in the fourth chapter of the first of Thessalonians, said that the Lord would "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

Nothing of the sort has happened. There is no sign of the Lord's coming, and he is already eighteen centuries behind date. "Behold I come quickly"—"Surely I come quickly." Such was the announcement. But, like many other divine promises, it has been falsified. The only orthodox way out of the difficulty is to say that the Lord does not reckon time as we do; with him a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day.

The general public, however, eighteen hundred years ago, did not know how long the prophecy was to remain unfulfilled, and it had an extraordinary power over them. Being mostly very ignorant, and therefore very credulous, they were easily terrified by the notion that the world was to be burnt up speedily; and they as readily embraced the doctrine which promised to bring them safely through the catastrophe. From the way in which the game answers still with the Christian

mob, after nearly two thousand years of exposure, we can understand what a splendid instrument of proselytising it must have been in the hands of the fanatical preachers of the early Church. Combine with it the Millennium promised to the saints after the Second Coming of Christ, in which they were to enjoy themselves royally, and you will feel the justice of Gibbon's remark that "it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the Christian faith." It was inculcated by a succession of Fathers, from Justin Martyr to Lactantius. But when it had served its purpose it was allowed to drop. As Gibbon says, "it was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion, and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism." The Millennium is stigmatised, in what once stood as the forty-first Article of the English Church, as "a fable of Jewish dotage." We wonder whether the plain-spoken divines who drew drew up that article included Jesus Christ, St. Paul, and St. John among the Jewish dotards.

At the end of the tenth century the doctrine of the Second Coming was revived. The people were led to believe that the old serpent's thousand years of bondage was nearly up, that he would be let loose about the year 1,000, that Antichrist would then appear, and that the end of the world would follow. Churches and houses were therefore left to decay, as they would cease to be wanted. Whenever an eclipse of the sun or moon took place, the people ran into caverns and caves. Multitudes hurried off to Palestine, where they supposed Christ would make his descent. They transferred their property to the priests, who could say with Iago, "thus do I ever make my fool my purse." Others not only gave their property to the priests, but actually became their slaves; hoping, says Mosheim, that "the supreme Judge would be more favorable to them if they made themselves servants to *his* servants."

Jortin justly observes that the priests industriously cherished the delusion for the sake of filthy lucre. They accepted the gifts of their poor dupes, although earthly possessions would be as useless to them as to the laity if the last days were at hand. Donations to the Church were given by fools and received by knaves. The reason assigned for the gift is generally thus expressed: *Appropinquante mundi termino—The end of the world being now at hand.*

When the tenth century ended without a sign of the Second Advent, people looked at each other and said "He is not come then." And the priests chuckled, "No, he has not come, but your property is gone." There was no chance of bringing an action for obtaining money under false pretences, and Holy Mother Church never gives back a farthing of what she obtains, for what is once devoted to God can never be alienated without sacrilege.

Although the delusion has been milder since then, it has always lurked among the ignorant, and occasionally become acute. Silly Christians still shake their heads when a comet is visible, and regard it as a blazing portent. They even hint that one of these wanderers through space may collide with our globe and cause the final smash; not knowing that comets are quite harmless, and that hundreds of cubic miles of their tails would not outweigh a jar-ful of air.

Dr. Cumming foretold the grand collapse several times. His books were read by thousands of superstitious people. Finally, he was played out, and he went to his grave a discredited prophet. Had he been wiser he would have fixed the event some time after he was likely to be buried. Then the game would have lasted his lifetime, and what does it matter if you are found out when you are dead?

How far Cumming believed his own prophecies is a moot point. It is said that he bought the lease of a house, which expired about twenty-five years after his date for the day of judgment.

Prophet Baxter, of the *Christian Herald*, now runs the business. He wrote a book to prove that Louis Napoleon was Antichrist. Louis Napoleon is dead and nearly forgotten. Then he proved that Gambetta was Antichrist. Gambetta is dead and not forgotten. Then he proved that Prince Jerome was Antichrist. Prince Jerome is nowhere, and Baxter is looking out for a fresh Antichrist. Yet his paper is read by hundreds of thousands. As Heine said, the fool-crop is perennial.

Over in America the Second Adventists are a numerous body. They watch and pray for the coming of Christ, and keep white robes ready for their ascension. Some time ago they donned their linen in the expectation that the Lord was coming that very night. But the Lord did not put in an appearance, and the robes were laid up in lavender again. A fat matron trying to fly in that outfit would be a sight worth seeing. It would take several angels to float some of them. Even the archangel Michael might shrink from tackling twenty-stone.

Like everything else in Christianity, except the accursed doctrine of salvation by faith, the idea of the end of the world and a day of judgment is derived from older sources.

The Hindu *Kalpas*, covering thousands of millions of years, are periods of creation and destruction, and each is called a day of Brahma. During this enormous interval the universe begins and ends. Brahma wakes from his slumbrous solitude, and his thoughts and emotions embody themselves in worlds and creatures. When he falls to rest again, the whole system of finite things vanishes like the baseless fabric of a vision.

The Stoics also believed in a periodical destruction and renovation of all things. They, as Alger says, "conceived of God as a pure artistic force or seed of universal energy, which exhibits its history in the evolution of the cosmos, and, on its completion, blossoms into fire and vanishes. The universal periodical con-

flagration destroys all evil, and leaves the indestructible God alone in his pure essence again."

The Persians entertained a similar conception, which more closely resembles the Christian doctrine. Ahura-Mazda creates all things good, and the race of men happy and immortal. But Angra-Mainyas, his adversary, the old serpent, corrupts them, brings upon them misery and death, and leads their souls to his dark abode. Good and evil spirits fill all creation with their conflict. But at last Ahura-Mazda subdues Angra-Mainyas, nullifies all the mischief he has done by means of a great deliverer, who is sent to instruct and redeem mankind, raises the dead, purifies the world with fire, and restores all nature to its paradisiacal condition.

The Scandinavians had their Ragnarök, or Twilight of the Gods, when all the powers of good and evil join in battle. The horn sounds, the last day dawns in fire and splendor from the sky, in fog and venom from the abyss. Flames destroy the earth, the combatants mostly slay each other, but Gimli, the heaven of the All-Father, is a refuge for the survivors, and the beginning of a new and fairer world.

Chiefly influenced by the Persian, and partly by other systems, the later Jewish theology, as represented by the Pharisees, taught that Jehovah would reappear in the last days; and the Day of the Lord, which in former ages meant any national calamity, became transformed into the Day of Judgment. What was to happen on that occasion is described in the Book of Enoch. This was written about a century before Christ, yet it is quoted in the Epistle of Jude as the work of old transported Enoch, the seventh from Adam; a fact which throws a singular light on the critical acumen of the early Christians. Jesus Christ, Paul, and especially the author of Revelation, are indebted to the Book of Enoch. It provided them with nearly all the plot, dialogue and scenery of their judgment drama.

As judges of the dead, the Greeks had Minos, who presided at the trial of souls from Europe; Rhadamanthus, who examined those from Asia; and Æacus, who tried those from Africa. America and Australia were then unknown, and souls from those continents were not provided with inspectors. Of course the dead who held communication with the living, never told them more than they knew. The same thing continues to this day. All the messages from the departed given at all the Spiritist *séances* have not added a single fragment to the world's stock of information.

The ancient Egyptians believed in "after death the judgment." Souls were tried in the Hall of the two Truths, or the double Justice. They were weighed in the balance. Thoth noted the result, and Osiris pronounced sentence. Before burial, also, the Egyptian dead underwent a saner trial. The friends and relatives, the enemies and accusers of the deceased, assembled around the sarcophagus before forty-two assessors. He was put on his trial before them; and if justified, awarded an honorable burial; but, if condemned, disgraced by the withholding of funeral rites. Kings, as well as commoners, were apparently subject to the same ordeal. Does this account for the beneficent character of their government, and the prosperous content of the people, which is reflected in the placid smile of their sphinxes?

Probably the antique notion of a general Day of Judgment arose from the imposing trials, where the King sat in judgment, throned, jewelled, and guarded; where all were free to approach and claim justice; and where the sentences were executed by the soldiers directly they were passed. Add to this scene a general *auto da fé*, in which Christ plays the part of Grand Inquisitor, the saints that of familiars, and the Devil that of executioner, and you have a very fair idea of the Christian Day of Judgment.

"Day," we presume, must not be taken too literally. The Mohammedans believe the Great Assize will last

thousands of years. In that case the people who are fond of hearing trials will have a fine time, until their own turn comes. After all, even the Mohammedan computation seems too slender. To say nothing of the scientific antiquity of man, and reckoning according to the Bible chronology, about two hundred thousand million souls have passed into eternity already, and the Lord knows how many more will join them. Imagination fails in conceiving the time it would take to try all that multitude, especially if there are a good number of Tichborne cases. Besides, the whole thing seems unfair. Those who get a ticket for heaven at the end of the Day will enjoy a few thousand years less of bliss than the more fortunate ones who came early; and those who get a ticket for hell in the first hour will suffer a few thousand years of torture more than those who are sentenced at the finish.

The criterion at the Day of Judgment will be Faith. That is a difficult virtue to wise men, and an easy one to fools. The ninnies, therefore, will have the best chance. This must be very consoling to mankind if Carlyle's estimate of England's population—"thirty millions, mostly fools"—may be extended to the rest of the world.

All who have faith enough to secure a seat in heaven are called "sheep," and they could not be labelled better. All the others are called "goats," that is, lusty, strong-legged fellows who despise the game of follow-my-leader, who object to walking along the road made for them, and are always leaping the fence to see what is on the other side. There was war in heaven once, we are told, but that was before Satan and his crew were kicked out. There will never be war in heaven again. Jesus Christ will easily be able to manage his sheep. But the Devil will have a tougher job with his goats. There will always be a kingdom in heaven, but ten to one there will be a republic in hell.

Christianity says we are to be saved by faith. Our view is different. Men are saved by thinking and

acting. While Christian monks were trying to degrade men below the level of brutes, some unknown Secularists invented windmills and glass windows. While the Inquisition was exterminating heresy and purifying the faith, Galileo was inventing the telescope. While Church of Englandism and Methodism were fighting over the faith in England, Watt was discovering the use of steam. Faith never saved men here, and why should it save them hereafter? God, if he exist, must be too humane and sensible to judge men according to their belief; and if he endowed us with reason, he will never damn us for exercising it.

Wandering in an immense forest during the night, said Diderot, I have only one little light to guide me. A stranger comes to me and says, "My friend, blow out your candle to find your way better." That light is reason, and that stranger is a theologian.

Science, no less than common sense, dispels Christian superstition. Evolution destroys the idea of a general catastrophe. There was a time when life could not exist on the earth, and there will probably come a time when it will cease to exist. Long before then man will have disappeared. But the æon of our race may extend to millions of years. Is not this time practically infinite? And do not those who make it a cause for lamentation and despair resemble the man that Spinoza ridicules, who refuses to eat his dinner to-day because he is not sure of a dinner for ever and ever? Sit down, you fool, and eat.

SHELLEY'S ATHEISM.*

CHARLES DARWIN, the Newton of biology, was an Agnostic—which is only a respectable synonym for an Atheist. The more he looked for God the less he could find him. Yet the corpse of this great "infidel" lies in Westminster Abbey. We need not wonder, therefore, that Christians and even parsons are on the Shelley Centenary committee, or that Mr. Edmund Gosse was chosen to officiate as high pontiff at the Horsham celebration. Mr. Gosse is a young man with a promising past—to borrow a witticism from Heine. In the old *Examiner* days he hung about the army of revolt. Since then he has become a bit of a Philistine, though he still affects a superior air, and retains a pretty way of turning a sentence. The selection of such a man to pronounce the eulogy on Shelley was in keeping with the whole proceedings at Horsham, where everybody was lauding a "bogus Shelley," as Mr. Shaw remarked at the Hall of Science celebration.

Mr. Gosse was good enough to tell the Horsham celebrants that "it was not the poet who was attacked" in Shelley's case, but "the revolutionist, the enemy of kings and priests, the extravagant and paradoxical humanitarian." Mr. Gosse generously called this an "intelligent aversion," and in another sense than his it undoubtedly was so. The classes, interests, and abuses that were threatened by Shelley's principles, acted with

* On August 4, 1892, the centenary of Shelley's birth was celebrated at Horsham, where it is intended to found a Shelley Library, if not a Shelley Museum. The celebrants were a motley collection. They were all concealing the poet's principles and paying honor to a bogus Shelley. A more honest celebration took place in the evening at the Hall of Science, Old-street, London, E.C. Six or seven hundred people were addressed by Dr. Furnivall, G. B. Shaw, and G. W. Foote; and every pointed reference to Shelley's religious, social, and political heresy was enthusiastically applauded.

the intelligence of self-preservation. They gave him an ill name and would gladly have hung him. Yes, it was, beyond all doubt, an "intelligent aversion." Byron only dallied with the false and foolish beliefs of his age, but Shelley meant mischief. This accounts for the hatred shown towards him by orthodoxy and privilege.

Mr. Gosse himself appears to have an "intelligent aversion" to Shelley's *principles*. He professes a great admiration for Shelley's *poetry;* but he regards it as a sort of beautiful landscape, which has no other purpose than gratifying the æsthetic taste of the spectator. For the poet's *teaching* he feels or affects a lofty contempt. Shelley the singer was a marvel of delicacy and power; but Shelley the thinker was at best a callow enthusiast. Had he lived as long as Mr. Gosse, and moved in the same dignified society, he would have acquired an "intelligent aversion" to the indiscretions of his youthful passion for reforming the world; but fate decided otherwise, and he is unfortunate enough to be the subject of Mr. Gosse's admonitions.

Shelley lived like a Spartan; a hunk of bread and a jug of water, dashed perhaps with milk, served him as a dinner. His income was spent on the poor, on struggling men of genius, and on necessitous friends. Now as the world goes, this is simply asinine; and Mr. Gosse plays to the Philistine gallery by sneering at Shelley's vegetarianism, and playfully describing him as an "eater of buns and raisins." It was also lamented by Mr. Gosse that Shelley, as a "hater of kings," had an attraction for "revolutionists," a set of persons with whom Mr. Gosse would have no sort of dealings except through the policeman. "Social anarchists," likewise, gathered "around the husband of Godwin's daughter"—a pregnant denunciation, though it leaves us in doubt whether Shelley, Godwin, or Mary was the anarch, or all three of them together; while the "husband" seems to imply that getting married was one of the gravest of Shelley's offences.

But the worst of all is to come: "Those to whom the restraints of religion were hateful marshalled themselves under the banner of the youth who had rashly styled himself as an Atheist, forgetful of the fact that all his best writings attest that, whatever name he might call himself, he, more than any other poet of the age, saw God in everything."

We beg to tell Mr. Gosse that he is libellous and impertinent. He knows little or nothing of Atheists if he thinks they are only repelled by the "restraints of religion." They have restraints of their own, quite as numerous and imperative as those of any religionist who fears his God. What is more, they have incentives which religion weakens. Mr. Gosse is perhaps in a state of ignorance on this matter. He probably speaks of the moral condition of Atheists as a famous American humorist proposed to lecture on science, with an imagination untrammeled by the least acquaintance with the subject.

So much (it is quite enough) for the libel; and now for the impertinence. Mr. Gosse pretends to know Shelley's mind better than he knew it himself. Shelley called himself an Atheist; that is indisputable; but he did so "rashly." He was mistaken about his own opinions; he knew a great many things, but he was ignorant of himself. But the omniscient Mr. Gosse was born (or *was* he *born?*) to rectify the poet's blunder, and assure the world that he was a Theist without knowing it—in fact, a really God-intoxicated person.

What wonder is it that Mr. Gosse became intoxicated in turn, and soared in a rapture of panegyric over a Shelley of his own construction? "The period of prejudice is over," he exclaimed, "and we are gathered here to-day under the auspices of the greatest poet our language has produced since Shelley died, encouraged by universal public opinion and by dignitaries of all the professions—yea, even by prelates of our national Church." Here the preacher's intoxication became

maudlin, and there should have been an interval for soda-water.

Curiously enough, the very last page of Trelawny's *Records of Shelley and Byron* contains a conversation between that gallant friend of the two poets and a "prelate of our national Church."

"Some years ago, one of the most learned of the English Bishops questioned me regarding Shelley; he expressed both admiration and astonishment at his learning and writings. I said to the Bishop, 'You know he was an Atheist.' He said, 'Yes.' I answered: 'It is the key and the distinguishing quality of all he wrote. Now that people are beginning to distinguish men by their works, and not creeds, the critics, to bring him into vogue, are trying to make out that Shelley was not an Atheist, that he was rather a religious man. Would it be right in me, or anyone who knew him, to aid or sanction such a fraud?' The Bishop said: 'Certainly not, there is nothing righteous but truth.' And there our conversation ended."

Trelawny's bishop was willing (outside church, and in private conversation) to deprecate prejudice and acknowledge the supremacy of truth; and perhaps for that reason he allowed that Shelley *was* an Atheist. Mr. Gosse's bishops will soon be converting him into a pillar of the Church.

Trelawny knew Shelley a great deal better than Mr. Gosse. He enjoyed an intimate friendship with the poet, not in his callow days, but during the last year or two of his life, when his intellect was mature, and his genius was pouring forth the great works that secure his immortality. During that time Shelley professed the opinions he enunciated in *Queen Mab*. He said that the matter of that poem was good; it was only the treatment that was immature. Again and again he told Trelawny that he was content to know nothing of the origin of the universe; that religion was chiefly a means of deceiving and robbing the people; that it fomented hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness; and that it also fettered the intellect, deterring men from solving the problems of individual

and social life, as well as the problems of nature, out of regard for the supposed oracles of Omniscience, which were after all the teachings of bigoted and designing priests. Shelley called himself an Atheist; he wrote "Atheist" after his name on a famous occasion; and Trelawny says "he never regretted having done this."

"The principal fault I have to find," wrote Trelawny, "is that the Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions."

On another occasion Shelley said to Trelawny—"The knaves are the cleverest; they profess to know everything; the fools believe them, and so they govern the world." Which is a most sagacious observation. He said that "Atheist!" in the mouth of orthodoxy was "a word of abuse to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten the foolish, a threat to intimidate the wise and good."

Mr. Gosse may reply that Shelley's conversations with Trelawny are not absolute evidence; that they were written down long afterwards, and that we cannot be sure of Shelley's using the precise words attributed to him. Very well then; be it so. Mr. Gosse has appealed to Shelley's "writings," and to Shelley's writings we will go. True, the epithet "best" is inserted by Mr. Gosse as a saving qualification; but we shall disregard it, partly because "best" is a disputable adjective, but more because *all* Shelley's writings attest his Atheism.

Let us first go to Shelley's prose, not because it is his "best" work (though some parts of it are exquisitely beautiful, often very powerful, and always chaste), but because prose is less open than verse to false conception and interpretation. In the fine fragment "On Life" he acutely observes that "Mind, as

far as we have any experience of its properties, and beyond that experience how vain is argument! cannot create, it can only perceive." And he concludes "It is infinitely improbable that the cause of mind, that is, of existence, is similar to mind." Be it observed, however, that Shelley does not dogmatise. He simply cannot conceive that mind is the *basis* of all things. The cause of life is still obscure. "All recorded generations of mankind," Shelley says, "have wearily busied themselves in inventing answers to this question; and the result has been—Religion."

Shelley's essay "On a Future State" follows the same line of reasoning as his essay "On Life." He considers it highly probable that *thought* is "no more than the relation between certain parts of that infinitely varied mass, of which the rest of the universe is composed, and which ceases to exist as soon as those parts change their positions with regard to each other." His conclusion is that "the desire to be for ever as we are, the reluctance to a violent and unexperienced change," which is common to man and other living beings, is the "secret persuasion which has given birth to the opinions of a future state."

If we turn to Shelley's published letters we shall find abundant expressions of hostility to and contempt for religion. Those letters may deserve the praise of Matthew Arnold or the censure of Mr. Swinburne; but, in either case, they may be taken as honest documents, written to all sorts of private friends, and never intended for publication. Byron's letters were passed about freely, and largely written for effect; Shelley's were written under ordinary conditions, and he unbosomed himself with freedom and sincerity.

From one of his early letters we find that he contemplated a translation of the *System of Nature*, which is frequently quoted in the notes to *Queen Mab*. He couples Jehovah and Mammon together as fit for the worship of "those who delight in wickedness and

slavery." In a letter to Henry Reveley he pictures God as delighted with his creation of the earth, and seeing it spin round the sun; and imagines him taking out "patents to supply all the suns in space with the same manufacture." When the poet was informed by Ollier that a certain gentleman (it was Archdeacon Hare) hoped he would humble his soul and "receive the spirit into him," Shelley replied: "if you know him personally, pray ask him from me what he means by receiving the *spirit into me;* and (if really it is any good) how one is to get at it." He goes on to say: "I was immeasurably amused by the quotation from Schlegel about the way in which the popular faith is destroyed—first the Devil, then the Holy Ghost, then God the Father. I had written a Lucianic essay to prove the same thing." In the very year of his death, writing to John Gisborne, he girds at the popular faith in God, and with reference to one of its most abhorrent doctrines he exclaims—"As if, after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty million more in hell, or charitably annihilated by a *coup de grâce* of the bungler who brought us into existence at first."—A dozen other quotations from Shelley's letters might be given, all to pretty much the same effect, but the foregoing must suffice.

A thorough analysis of Shelley's poetry, showing the essential Atheism which runs through it from beginning to end, would require more space than we have at our command. We shall therefore simply point out, by means of instances, how indignantly or contemptuously he always refers to religion as the great despot and impostor of mankind.

The *Revolt of Islam* stigmatises "Faith" as "an obscene worm." The sonnet on the Fall of Bonaparte concludes with a reference to "Bloody Faith, the foulest birth of time." Shelley frequently conceives Faith as serpentine and disgusting. In *Rosalind and Helen* he writes—

> Grey Power was seated
> Safely on her ancestral throne;
> And Faith, the Python, undefeated,
> Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on
> Her foul and wounded train.

In the great and splendid *Ode to Liberty* the image undergoes a Miltonic sublimation.

> Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves
> Hung tyranny; beneath, sat deified
> The sister-pest, congregator of slaves.

Invariably does the poet class religion and oppression together — "Religion veils her eyes: Oppression shrinks aghast."—"Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood."—"And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne."

Mr. Herbert Spencer writes with learning and eloquence about the Power of the Universe and the Unknowable. Shelley pricked this bubble of speculation in the following passage:

> What is that Power? Some moonstruck sophist stood
> Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
> Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
> The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
> His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown.

In one verse of the *Ode to Liberty* the poet exclaims:

> O that the free would stamp the impious name
> Of . . . into the dust or write it there.

What is the omitted word? Mr. Swinburne says the only possible word is—God. We agree with him. Anything else would be a ridiculous anti-climax, and quite inconsistent with the powerful description of—

> this foul gordian word,
> Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
> Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
> The axes and the rods that awe mankind.

"Pope" and "Christ" are alike impossible. With

respect to "mankind" they are but local designations. The word must be universal. It is *God.*

The glorious speech of the Spirit of the Hour, which terminates the third Act of *Prometheus Unbound*—that superb drama of emancipate Humanity—lumps together "Thrones, altars, judgment seats, and prisons," as parts of one gigantic system of spiritual and temporal misrule. Man, when redeemed from falsehood and evil, rejects his books "of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance"; and the veil is torn aside from all "believed and hoped." And what is the result? Let the Spirit of the Hour answer.

> The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself; just, gentle, wise; but man
> Passionless? no, yet free from guilt or pain,
> Which were, for his will made or suffered them;
> Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
> From chance, and death, and mutability,
> The clogs of that which else might oversoar
> The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

What a triumphant flight! The poet springs from earth and is speedily away beyond sight—almost beyond conception—like an elemental thing. But his starting-point is definite enough. Man is exempt from awe and worship; from spiritual as well as political and social slavery; king over himself, ruling the anarchy of his own passions. And the same idea is sung by Demogorgon at the close of the fifth Act. The "Earth-born's spell yawns for heaven's despotism," and "Conquest is dragged captive through the deep."

> Love, from its awful throne of patient power
> In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
> Of dread endurance, from the slippery steep,
> And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
> And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.
To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

This is the Atheism of Shelley. Man is to conquer, by love and hope and thought and endurance, his birthright of happiness and dignity. Humanity is to take the place of God.

It has been argued that if Shelley had lived he would have repented the "indiscretions of his youth," and gravitated towards a more "respectable" philosophy. Well, it is easy to prophesy; and just as easy, and no less effectual, to meet the prophet with a flat contradiction. "Might have been" is no better than "might not have been." Was it not declared that Charles Bradlaugh would have become a Christian if he had lived long enough? Was not the same asserted of John Stuart Mill? One was nearly sixty, the other nearly seventy; and we have to wonder what is the real age of intellectual maturity. Only a few weeks before his death, Shelley wrote of Christianity that "no man of sense could think it true." That was his deliberate and final judgment. Had he lived long enough to lose his sense; had he fallen a victim to some nervous malady, or softening of the brain; had he lingered on to a more than ripe (a rotten) old age, in which senility may unsay the virile words of manhood; it is conceivable that Shelley might have become a

devotee of the faith he had despised. But none of these things did happen. What Shelley *was* is the only object of sane discussion. And what he was we know—an Atheist, a lover of Humanity.

LONG FACES.

EVERY one who has turned over old volumes of sermons, adorned with the authors' portraits, must have been struck with the length of their faces. They seem to say—parodying the famous line of Dante—"Abandon jokes all ye who enter here." Those men preached a solemnly absurd creed, and they looked absurdly solemn. Their faces seemed as devoid of merriment as the faces of jackasses, and the heads above them were often as stupid. Justice forbid that I should run down a Hooker, a Barrow, a Taylor, or a South. They were men of *genius*, and all genius is of the blood royal. I read their writings with pleasure and profit, which is more than nine-tenths of the clergy can say with any approach to honesty. But a single swallow does not make a summer, and a few men of genius do not elevate a profession. I am perfectly convinced that the great bulk of the preaching fraternity have cultivated a solemn aspect—not perhaps deliberately, but at least instinctively—in order to impose on the ignorant and credulous multitude. The very tone of voice in which they pray, give out hymns, and preach, is *artificial;* in keeping with their artificial ideas and artificial sentiments; which, if they were expressed in natural tones, would excite universal contempt and derision.

Now this solemnity is the best trick in the priest's game. Gravity is always mistaken by the multitude for wisdom. A round-faced merry fellow shall make a bright, sensible speech, and he will be voted frivolous; but a long-faced, saturnine fellow shall utter a string of dull platitudes, and he will be voted a Solon. This is well known to the clergy, who have developed a perfect art of dullness. They talk an infinite deal of nothing, use a multitude of solemn words to hide an absurdity or no meaning at all, and utter the inherited shibboleths of their craft like the august oracles of a recent revelation.

Concede them the advantage of solemnity, or reverence, or whatever else it is called, and you give them the victory at the beginning of the battle. If *you* pull a long face over their nonsense, the spectators, after all your arguments, will say, "There *must* be something in it, though, for see how *serious* he is." Whereas a light jest and a merry smile will show you are heart-free, and beyond the range of clerical artillery.

I do not pretend, however, that the efforts of Freethought critics should have no background of seriousness. Wit without reason, says Heine, is but a sneeze of the intelligence. But has not wit ever been the keenest weapon of the great emancipators of the human mind? Not the mere plaything of an idle mind in an idle hour, but the coruscating blade to pierce the weak places of folly and imposture. Aristophanes, Lucian, Rabelais, Erasmus, and Voltaire—to take a few great instances—were all serious in aim and intention. They valued truth, goodness, and beauty, as much as the dreariest preachers. But they felt, because of their temperament, that while the dry light of the intellect is suited to the study of science, it is inadequate in the realm of political, social, and religious debate, where everything is steeped in feeling, and hopes and fears strive together, and imagination kindles the very senses into keener play.

After all, perhaps, this word *temperament* is a solution in itself. When Bishop South was taken to task by a brother bishop for his witticisms, he replied, "Do you mean to say that if God had given you any wit you would not have used it?" Thus is wisdom justified of her children.

My friendly though severe critic, Dr. Coit, who recently discoursed at South-place Institute (or is it Chapel?) on the National Secular Society in general and myself in particular, could hardly deny that Voltaire was a master of wit, sarcasm, irony, and ridicule. Well, now, let us see what some serious writers have said of this nimble spirit. Robert Browning, in *The Two Poets of Croisic*, thus salutes him:

> Ay, sharpest shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
> To death Imposture through the armor-joints!

Carlyle says "He gave the death-stab to modern superstition," and "it was a most weighty service." Buckle says he "used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly," and thus "produced more effect than the gravest arguments could have done." "Nor can any one since the days of Luther be named," says Brougham, "to whom the spirit of free inquiry, nay, the emancipation of the human mind from spiritual tyranny, owes a more lasting debt of gratitude."

There is a story of the manuscript of Harrington's *Oceana* being filched and given to Cromwell, and the sagacious "usurper" returned it saying, "My government is not to be overturned with paper pellets." But the ironical pamphlet, *Killing no Murder*, produced a different effect. Nor did the royal and imperial despots, and their priestly abettors, in the eighteenth century, dread the solemn lovers of freedom. But the winged pen of Voltaire was a different matter. "Bigots and tyrants," says Macaulay, "who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name."

If Dr. Coit imagines that Voltaire has lost his

influence in France, I venture to say he is mistaken. The hand of Voltaire is on Renan, and on dozens of living soldiers in the French army of progress. And what man of letters in England—a country abounding in "the oxen of the gods," strong, slow, and stupid—is free from his influence? Carlyle's early essay on Voltaire is a mixture of hatred and admiration. But read the Life of Frederick, and see how the French snake fascinates the Scotch Puritan, until at last he flings every reservation aside, and hails with glowing panegyric the Savior of Calas.

Let me refer Dr. Coit to the delightful preface of a delightful book—Leland's introduction to his fine translation of Heine's *Reisebilder*. "Woe to those who are standing near," says Leland, "when a humorist of this stamp is turned loose upon the world. He knows nothing of your old laws,—like an Azrael-Napoleon he advances conscienceless, feeling nothing but an overpowering impulse, as of some higher power which bids him strike and spare not." But, after all, the main cause of progress is *agitation*, and though the agitation may be "eminently disagreeable to many, even friends, who are brought within its immediate action, it will be eminently beneficial in the end."

Yes, the hard-bound human mind, like the hard-bound soil, has to be ploughed up. Let it shriek as it will, the work must be done, or the light and air will never penetrate, and an ocean of seeds will lie barren on the surface.

Dr. Coit need not fear that ridicule will excite apprehensions about the multiplication table. Ridicule has a fine scent for its proper prey. It must detect the *ridiculous* before it couches and springs. Truth, honor, consistency, disinterestedness, are invulnerable. What ridicule can kill deserves to die.

Mr. George Meredith writes of "that first-born of common-sense, the vigilant Comic, which is the genius of thoughtful laughter." Folly is the natural prey of this hunter, and Folly is found in the churches as well

as in the streets. Some men, however, are non-laughers by birthright, and as men are apt to make a virtue of their deficiencies, it is not surprising if, as Mr. Meredith observes, the "laughter-hater soon learns to dignify this dislike as an objection in morality."

Persons who have read the *Freethinker* from the first do not need to be assured of the earnest spirit of its conductors. They fight no less sternly for the iridescent jewels in their swords. But Dr. Coit appears to object to fighting altogether. He seems to bid us rest content with what we have won. That is, he bids us leave superstition, with all its brood of lies and wrongs, in possession of the schools, the universities, the churches, the hospitals, the workhouses, and every other institution. He bids us leave it with its large grasp on the private and public life of the community, and go on with our constructive work in face of all this overwhelming frustration. No doubt he means well, but we are not foolish enough to take his advice. We tell Dr. Coit that he does not understand the obstructive power of theology, and that he is thus unable to appreciate the work of the National Secular Society.

But let us return to the point of ridicule, and the point of "blasphemy." Dr. Coit found two "lessons for the day" in my *Philosophy of Secularism*, and he spoke of my *Shadow of the Sword* as "a noble plea for peace." But he complained of my exposing the absurdities and immoralities of the Bible—a book which is thrust into the hands of little children in our public schools. He also complained of my dragging to light the Crimes of Christianity. But his anger was most excited by one of my "Bible Romances"—*A Virgin Mother*. Some fastidious persons even object to the title, thus showing their abysmal ignorance of Christian literature. The phrase is common in Catholic books of devotion, like the Mother of God. It occurs in Milton's Ode on the Nativity and in *Paradise Lost*. I have marked it a dozen times in Professor Palgrave's collection of Sacred Songs. But Dr. Coit objects to

my comparison of the Holy Ghost's "overshadowing" of the Virgin Mary with the divine impregnations of earthly women by the gods of the Greek pantheon. He regards the one as a "mystery" and the others as vulgar amours. But this depends on your point of view. Lord Bacon found a mine of hidden wisdom in some of these "amours," and Mr. Morris makes beautiful poetry of the loves of Zeus and Danae, which is more than any one has ever succeeded in doing with the relations between the Holy Ghost and Mary. I admit, however, that taste is not disputable; and I refer Dr. Coit to the passage of my *Virgin Mother* in which I cite Justin Martyr as appealing to the Pagans not to mock at the Incarnation, on the express ground that they also taught the same doctrine in their stories of the demi-gods who were born of women after the embraces of deities. Surely, then, it is idle to complain of *my* disrespect of this Christian dogma. Nor is it just to say that my criticism of it cannot be read to a mixed audience. That is the fault of the *doctrine*. So far as my *words* go, there is not a syllable to shock any but a prurient modesty.

With respect to Dr. Coit's plea for bringing the kindness of social intercourse into the war of ideas, I have this to say—It is impossible. Timid persons have always sighed for this policy, but when the fight began they have found themselves "between the fell incensèd points of mighty opposites." Religion should be treated as freely as other subjects. That is all I claim, and I will not be satisfied with less. I cannot consent to relinquish any weapon that is legitimate in other warfare. Nor for the sake of temporary *feeling* will I be false to the permanent *interests* of my species. I will laugh at folly, scorn hypocrisy, expose falsehood, and bathe my sword in the heart's blood of imposture. But I will not descend to personalities. I do not war with *persons*, but with *principles*.

My object is to destroy the Christian superstition and prepare the way for a more rational and humane con-

dition of society. I shall adapt myself, as well as I can, to the shifting conditions of the struggle. My aim is to *succeed.* My policy, therefore, will never be determined by a personal preference. I shall follow the path that promises victory. But I do not, and will not, dictate to others. Within the scope of our principles there is room for many policies. Let each do his best, according to his light and opportunity. Let Dr. Coit, too, go his way as I go mine. We travel by different routes, but perhaps we shall meet at the goal.

OUR FATHER.

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

—R. Browning, *Pippa Passes.*

The Apostles' Creed, with which the Apostles never had anything to do, begins with the words "I believe in God the Father Almighty." The last word, "Almighty," is an adjective which we owe to the metaphysical genius of Christian theologians; and the first words, "I believe," are the customary shibboleth of the priests of every religion. For the rest, this extract from the Creed is taken from the Lord's Prayer, which itself is a brief selection from common Jewish prayers before the days of Jesus. According to the evangelists—whoever *they* were—Jesus taught his disciples to pray to "Our Father which art in Heaven" for a number of things which no one ever obtained by that process. Nevertheless the petition

is offered up, generation after generation, by millions of Christians, whose hands are first folded in the gesture of prayer on their mothers' knees, and whose lips are taught at the same time a form of words that clings to them for life.

Our Father! The words are pretty and touching. When the child hears them he thinks of some one like his own father, but immensely bigger and more powerful; and as the child is taught that all the necessaries and comforts of life he enjoys, at the expense of his parents' labor and loving care, are really gifts from the Father behind the scenes, it is no wonder that this mysterious being becomes the object of gratitude and affection.

Which art in Heaven! Up there in the region of dreams, beyond the sailing clouds, far away through the deep blue, where imagination builds its fairy palace of delight, and God sits on his golden throne, and swift, bright angels speed forth to execute his commands. Tell a child anything you please about that land of fancy and you will be believed, especially if the tale comes from beloved lips, or from lips that bear the glamor of authority. And what the child is to the adult, early or savage man is to the civilisee. To the African negroes the highest god is the Sky; the great deity *Dyu* of our Aryan ancestors was the Sky; the Greek *Zeus* and the Latin *Jupiter* were both the Heaven-Father; and we still say "Heaven forgive me!" or "Fear the vengeance of Heaven!"

This Heaven, however, is no longer credible to any one with a tincture of science. Hard as the truth to a child or a savage, the sky is not a reality, but an optical illusion. For forty or forty-five miles from the earth's surface there is a belt of atmosphere, growing rarer and rarer as it approaches the infinite ocean of æther. Gone for ever is the old delusion of a solid Heaven overhead, with windows in it, through which God and the angels looked down upon the earth and

its inhabitants. And what site is there for Heaven out in the cold blackness of space?

That Heaven is gone, and where is Our Father? Science shows us a world of absolute order, in which what we call the laws of nature—the observed sequence and recurrence of phenomena—are never broken. The world was not fashioned for man's dwelling, nor is it maintained for his benefit. Towards the poles he freezes, towards the equator he burns. The rain nourishes his crops or rots them, without asking his pleasure; the sea bears him or drowns him, with equal unconcern; the lightning slays him or spares him, whether good, bad or indifferent, as he happens to be in or out of the line of its dazzling flight; famine pinches his cheeks if he cannot procure food; the pestilence seizes upon his nerves and blood unless he learns the antidote to its ravages. He stands amidst the play of terrific forces, and only preserves himself by vigilance, patience, courage and industry. If he falls the enemy is upon him, and the doom of the vanquished is death. Nature shows him no mercy. His mistakes are as fatal as his crimes.

"God" has been in his "Heaven" for eternity, but all is *not* right with the world. Man is always endeavoring to improve it, but what assistance comes from above? A Father in Heaven would be a glorious fact. But who can believe it? "Our Father" is utterly careless of his children. The celestial Rousseau sends all his offspring to the Foundling.

The late hard weather has thrown thousands of honest men out of employment, and increased the death-rate alarmingly. Where is the wisdom of this? Where is the goodness? The worst of men would alter it if they could. But God, they say, can do it, and he does not. Yet they still look up and say "Our Father." And the Father looks down with a face as blenchless as the Sphinx's, gazing forthright across the desert sands.

What father would permit in his family the gross

disparities we see in human life? One gorges and another starves; one is bloated and another is death's counterfeit; one is dressed in three-piled velvet and another goes in looped and windowed rags; one is idle and another slaves; one is sated with pleasure and another is numbed with pain; one lolls in a palace and another shivers in a hovel. What human father would not be ashamed to treat his children with such infamous partiality?

Look at the physical and moral filth, and the mental abasement, in our great Christian cities, where new churches are constantly built for the worship of God, where Bibles are circulated by the million, and where hundreds of sleek gentlemen flourish on the spoils of philanthropy. Read Mr. Rudyard Kipling's story of East-end life; read the lucubrations of General Booth; listen to the ever-swelling wail over the poverty, misery, and degradation of hosts of our people; and then say if it is not high time to cease all this cant about Our Father which art in Heaven.

Man has always been his own Savior. His instrument is science, his wisdom is self-help. His redemption begins when he turns his eyes from the delusive Heaven and plucks up his heart from the fear of Hell. Despair vanishes before the steady gaze of instructed courage. Hope springs as a flower in the path of endeavor.

WAIT TILL YOU DIE.

PASCAL remarked that, whether Christianity were true or false, the Christian was on the safe side; and Diderot replied that the priests and apologists of Mohammedanism, or any other creed, could say the very same thing with equal force. The argument, if it be an argument, implies the possibility of error, and what applies to one religion applies to all. The votaries of every creed may be mistaken if there is no absolute certitude; or, if there should be one true religion among the multitude, and but one, only the devotees of that single faith can be on the safe side. But as no one knows *which* is the only true religion, it follows, according to the law of probabilities, that the odds are greatly against any particular religion being the right one. The Christian therefore would have one chance of being right, and nine hundred and ninety-nine chances of being wrong. He has thus one chance in a thousand above the Atheist.

But, on the other hand, if all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of a single one being certainly right? Does not the Christian's slight percentage of safety fade into something quite inappreciable in the light of this question? And is what is left—if *anything* is left—an adequate price for the abnegation of manhood? Would it tempt an honest man, with a sense of human dignity, to play fast and loose with his intellect, and accept a creed because it appeals to his selfish hopes and fears? Could such a slender chance of profit in the next life compensate for slavery in this life?

If belief is the safe side, the proper course is to believe *everything*. And it is useless to cry that this is impossible. Faith enables men to believe against

reason, and one act of credulity is little easier than a thousand. He whose creed is determined by his fears should give free scope to such emotions. If they are his guides let him follow them. Why should he argue when argument may mislead? Why should he stumble at trifles when he has surmounted the first great obstacle to credulity? Let him believe all the religions of the world at once. He can do this as easily as he can believe in the Trinity. And having embraced all, he may rest satisfied that if there be a true religion he undoubtedly possesses it.

We do not suppose, however, that this reasoning will have any effect on Christians, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, or Jews. But that very fact shows the hollow character of the argument from which we started. When the Christian talks about the safe side he is only displaying the weakness of his faith, and appealing to timidity when he has no further appeal to reason.

The argument of "the safe side" would have no pertinency, even with the imbecile, if man were immortal. It seeks advantage from the fact that every man must die. It tries to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

How frequent is the superstitionist's remark, "Wait till you come to die!" He does not always use these very words, but this is the meaning of all his verbiage. He forgets, or does not know, that philosophy destroys the terror of death. A rational man is aware of the truth expressed by Mill, that death is but one incident in life, and often the least important. He recognises with Bacon that we die daily. He knows that every hour is a step towards death. He does not play, like an ostrich, with the universal law of mortality; nor, on the other hand, does he allow the tomb to cast its chill obscurity over the business and pleasure of life. He lives without hypocrisy, and when the time comes he will die without fear. As Hamlet says, "the readiness is all." Another word also comes from the wisest

of men—"Cowards do often taste of death; the valiant die but once."

A belief that will do for life will do for death. The religionists prove this themselves. Whatever a man is confident of is sustaining. The Christian dies a Christian, and the Mohammedan a Mohammedan. The one has dying visions of angels—or may be of devils; the other sees heaven burst open, and the black-eyed houris of paradise beckon him with rosy fingers. What they leaned on in life supports them in death. Its truth or falsity makes no difference at that moment.

Freethinkers are sustained by *convictions*. Intellect and emotion concur in their case. They have no visions of angels or devils, but dear loved faces are better than phantoms, and he who has done a little good in the world, however humbly and obscurely, may dream of the happier and nobler days to come, when true words and good deeds will have brought forth the glorious fruit of happiness for the children of men.

We do not mean to assert that no Freethinker, at any time, ever relapsed on his death-bed. Such cases have apparently occurred during life, and while one particular religion is in the ascendant it is not difficult to understand them. The relapses are always to the creed a man finds about him, or to the creed of his childhood. They simply prove the power of environment and early training, and that a man needs all his strength to stand against big majorities. At best they are cases of mental pathology.

Great historic Freethinkers have always died true to their convictions. They were used to standing alone. For ample proof of this the reader is referred to my *Infidel Death Beds*. And when smaller Freethinkers are numerous enough they avoid the greatest danger of physical weakness. It is easy for Christian relatives or friends to pester a dying Freethinker; it is easy even, in the worst moments of weakness, to put words

in his mouth. But if Freethought friends visit him, he feels strengthened and relieved. Allies may well be needed, sometimes, in such a battle with bigotry.

After all, "Wait till you die!" is an argument of folly and cowardice. What can we conjecture of any other life except from our experience of this? On this earth reason is the safe side, honesty is the safe side, humanity is the safe side; and what is the safe side here is likely to be the safe side elsewhere.

DEAD THEOLOGY.

THIS is an age of "series." Every publisher issues one, and the number of them is legion. As far as possible they are written by "eminent hands," as old Jacob Tonson used to call his wretched scribblers in Grub-street garrets. But not every publisher can secure such an eminent hand as a live Archbishop. This has been achieved, however, by Messrs. Sampson, Low, Marston, and Company. Having projected a series of "Preachers of the Age," they were fortunate enough to enlist the Archbishop of Canterbury under their banner. His Grace, as it is etiquette to call him, though his natural name is Edward White Benson, leads off the publishers' attack on the British public with a volume of sermons entitled *Living Theology*. It is well printed on good paper, the binding is appropriate, and the price of three-and-sixpence puts it within the reach of the great middle-class public which cares for such things. We are far from sharing the opinion of a carper who remarked that, as sermons

go, this volume is rather dear. Thirteen sermons by an Archbishop! Could any man in his senses expect them for less money? The real wonder is that a man with £15,000 a-year should condescend to publish at all. We ought to feel thankful that he does not charge us a guinea a volume.

Prefixed to the thirteen sermons, at fourpence apiece, including the binding, is an excellent photo-gravure portrait of the Archbishop. The face is keen and scholarly, and not unpleasant. A noticeable nose, a large fluent mouth, shrewd eyes, and a high well-shaped head, make on the whole an agreeable picture. Something about the features shows the preacher, and something more the ecclesiastic. It is the type, and the best type, of the learned priest. Nobody could look at this portrait and call Edward White Benson a fool. But is any one in danger of doing so? Would not every one admit some ability in the unhereditary recipient of fifteen thousand a year? Parsons are not a brilliant body, but to wriggle, or climb, or rise to the top of the Black Army involves the possession of uncommon faculties.

The Archbishop is seldom eloquent, in the popular sense of the word; but his style has a certain force and color, always within the limits of exquisite breeding. If he consigned you to Gehenna, he would do it with bland graciousness; and if he swore at all, he would swear in Latin. His language in these sermons, as in another volume we noticed a year ago, is pure and nervous, with an etymological reason for every word. Sometimes he is quite felicitous. Now and then he uses metaphor with skill and illumination. The habitual concreteness of his style shows the clearness of his perceptions. Occasionally he is epigrammatic. "Strong enemies," he says in one place, "are better to us than weak friends. They show us our weak points." Finer and higher is another passage in the same sermon—"The yearning of multitudes is not in vain. After yearning comes impulse, volition,

movement." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to better this, unless a great poet cast it in the mould of a metaphor.

We confess that, on the whole, we have read the Archbishop's sermons with some pleasure, as well as with much attention. It is to his credit that he defies a superficial reading. We do not expect to find another volume in the series at all comparable with his. Dr. Maclaren, who comes second, is on a lower level, and the next descent to Mr. Price Hughes is a fall into a slough of incapable and reckless sentimentalism.

Living Theology is the title of the Archbishop's volume, but this is a misnomer, for the title belongs only to the first sermon. It misled us in this general application, as it will probably mislead others. We took it to be a setting forth of so much theology as the Archbishop thought *living*, in contradistinction to what he allowed to be *dead*. But we find a very miscellaneous lot of sermons, sometimes rather on Church work than on Church teaching. The title, therefore, is what Walt Whitman would call "a suck and a sell." Yet it is hardly worth while to labor the complaint, for titles are often better than the pages that follow them. Sometimes, indeed, a writer puts all his head into the title, and the rest of the book displays his imbecility. But this cannot be said of the Archbishop.

Another difficulty is this. The Archbishop's sermons are hard for a Freethinker to criticise. He seldom expounds and rarely argues. He addresses an audience who take the fundamentals of Christianity for granted. Yet he lays himself open here and there, and where he does so we propose to meet him.

In the first sermon Dr. Benson is surely going beyond his actual belief in referring to "the earliest race of man, with whom the whole race so nearly passed away." He can scarcely take the early chapters of Genesis literally at this time of day. In

the very next sermon he speaks cheerfully of the age of Evolution. That sermom was preached at St. Mary's, Southampton, to the British Association in 1882. It is on "The Spirit of Inquiry." "The Spirit of Inquiry," he says, "is God's spirit working in capable men, to enlarge the measure and the fulness of man's capacity." But if *capable* men are necessary, to say nothing of favorable conditions, the working of God's spirit seems lost in the natural explanation. Still, it is pleasant to find the Archbishop welcoming the Spirit of Inquiry, under any interpretation of its essence; and it may be hoped that he will vote accordingly when the Liberty of Bequest Bill reaches the Upper Chamber. It is also pleasant to read his admission that the Spirit of Inquiry (we keep his capitals) "has made short work not only of the baser religions, but of the baser forms of ours"—to wit, the Christian. Some of those "baser forms" are indicated in the following passage:

> "I know not whether any stern or any sensuous religion of heathendom has held up before men's astonished eyes features more appalling or more repulsive than those of the vindictive father, or of the arbitrary distributor of two eternities, or again of the easy compromiser of offences in return for houses and lands. Dreadful shadows under which thousands have been reared."

Dreadful shadows indeed! And not thousands, but countless millions, have been reared under them. Those dreadful shadows were for centuries the universal objects of Christian worship. They still hover over Spurgeon's tabernacle and a host of other houses of God. But they are hateful to Dr. Benson. To him the God of orthodoxy, the God of the Thirty-nine Articles, is dead. He dismisses Predestination, a vindictive God, and Everlasting Torment. He speaks of the very "prison" where Christ is said to have preached after his death, as a place "where spirits surely unlearn many a bias, many a self-wrought blindness, many a heedless error." Hell is

therefore a place of purgation, which is certainly an infinite improvement on the orthodox idea of eternal and irremediable woe, however it fall below the conception that the Creator has no right to punish his own failures.

Let the reader note who makes these admissions of the intellectual and moral death of the "baser forms" of Christianity. It is not an irresponsible *franc-tireur* of the Black Army, nor an expelled soldier like Mr. Voysey, nor a resigned soldier like Dr. Momerie. It is the Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest dignitary of the Church of England.

His Grace does not reflect—he cannot afford to reflect—that as the dead theology of to-day was the living theology of the past, so the living theology of to-day may be the dead theology of to-morrow.

The Archbishop still dogmatises, even in this sermon on the Spirit of Inquiry. In opposition to the man of science who knows of no limits to nature, he declares that "There is a *sum* of created things, and therefore a real end (however far off) to what can be known of them." In a certain sense, truly, there *is* an end to what can be known of nature, for human knowledge must ever be relative and not absolute. But the Archbishop's limit is not qualitative in man; it is quantitative in the universe. Herein he goes beyond the bounds of knowledge, and indulges in the very dogmatism for which he reprehends the materialist.

It is dogmatism also to assert that "the soul has every reason to believe itself absolutely eternal." Absolutely is a word of vast significance. How can it apply to "the soul"? Were "the soul" to subsist eternally in the future, it could not be *absolutely* eternal if it once began to be. "Every reason" is also too comprehensive. Dr. Benson may think he has good reasons for "the soul's" immortality, but he must be aware that divines of his own church have held the contrary doctrine.

Before the Spirit of Inquiry, says Dr. Benson, every other religion than Christianity fades away; though he has admitted that some parts of Christianity, the "baser forms," have shared the same fate. Every fresh conquest of the Spirit of Inquiry has "brought out some trait in the character, or some divine conception in the mind of Jesus of Nazareth." This sweeping statement is supported by "three very clearly marked" instances.

The first is that science shows us the unity of life. "The latest discovered laws involve at least this, that the Life of man is one Life." And this is "no more than the scientific verification of what was long ago stated, and by Christians (at least for a while) acted on."

In support of the Christian idea of the Unity of Life the Archbishop cites St. Paul, who once asked in a callous way if God cared for oxen. Had the Archbishop appealed to Jesus he would have found the oracle dumb, or something worse; for the Nazarene distinctly told his apostles to preach only to the Jews, and leave the Samaritans and Gentiles in darkness. St. Paul took a flight beyond this narrow patriotism. It was he, and not the personal disciples of Jesus, who broke down the barriers between Jew and Gentile. It was he who scorned the idea that Jesus, to use his own language, was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was he, and not Peter, or James, or John, who said that God had made all nations of one blood; he who declared "ye are all one in Christ." Yet it is easy to make too much of this; for St. Paul did not include the heathen and unbelievers within the fold of brotherhood; and when he asserted the fatherhood of God, he appealed to the previous utterance of a Greek poet, thus conceding his own want of originality.

One might imagine, too, that the old Jewish story of Creation—which in turn was not original—involved the common descent of the human raee; and as this

idea was almost, if not quite, universal, being based on the obvious generic resemblance of the various races of mankind, it seems a stretch of fancy to put it forward as "a Christian statement" in some way connected with "Jesus of Nazareth."

The Archbishop's second instance of the concurrence of modern progress with the teaching of Jesus, is, to say the least of it, peculiar. "From the liberty to inquire," he says, "comes the liberty to express the results of inquiry. And this is the preamble of the Charter of Jesus Christ."

We defy Dr. Benson to find a single plain passage about freedom of thought in the teachings of Jesus. The Nazarene was fond of saying, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." But it was reserved for Ingersoll to say, "He that hath a brain to think let him think."

The Archbishop goes on to claim Darwin as "our aged Master"—Darwin, who rejected Christianity for forty years of his life! He quotes from Beale the sentence, "Intellectual work of every kind must be free." "And the New Testament," he adds, "is still the one volume of books on religion which accepts this whole statement."

This is a bold—some would say a brazen—assertion. If the New Testament teaches anything clearly, it teaches that belief is necessary to salvation. That doctrine stifles free speech and extinguishes inquiry. Why investigate if you may be damned for your conclusions? And why allow investigation if another man's errors may involve your perdition? These questions have been answered logically enough by the Christian Church, and the "Charter of Jesus Christ" has been the worst of spiritual oppressions. No religion has been so intolerant as the Christian. Mohammedanism has been far less bigoted. Buddhism has the proud distinction of never having persecuted one human being in twenty-four centuries.

The Archbishop's third instance is fantastic to the

point of grotesqueness. Both Christianity and the Spirit of Inquiry, he says, are at one in "the demand for fruit." Does he mean to imply that other religions set their faces against "fruit"? Buddhism is quite imperative about moral duties. Mohammedanism gets itself obeyed in matters of conduct, while Christianity is quite ineffectual. Drink, gambling, and prostitution abound in Christian countries; in the Mohammedan world they have been sternly repressed. This is admitted by Dr. Benson in his volume on *Christ and His Times;* admitted, and even emphasised; so that he may, as it were, be confuted out of his own mouth.

If we take a leap to the penultimate sermon in the present volume, we find Archbishop Benson indulging in the same kind of loose statement and inconsequential reasoning. Its title is "Christ's Crucifixion, an All in All." The preacher scorns the Greek notion of the Crucifixion as "the shocking martyrdom of a grand young moralist." Such a notion, he says, is "quite inconsistent with the facts." Either we know not what Christ taught, or else he was more than man. And the Archbishop sets about proving this by means of a series of leaps over logical chasms.

After dilating on the innocence of Christ, who was certainly guilty according to the Mosaic law, and deserving of death according to the express command of Jehovah, the Archbishop writes as follows:

"Then we look back through our eighteen centuries, and we see that before the age of three-and-thirty he had fashioned sayings, had compacted thoughts, had expressed principles about duty, about the relative worth of things, about life, about love, about intercourse with God, about the formation of character, the relation of classes, the spirit of law, the essence of government, the unity of man, which had not existed, or which were not formulated when he opened his lips, but which have been and are the basis of society from the time they were known till now."

This is a tissue of false assumptions. The sayings, thoughts, and principles of Jesus *did* exist before, and they *were* formulated when he opened his lips. Not

one original utterance is ascribed to him in the whole of the Gospels. It is idle to bandy generalisations; let the Archbishop select specimens of Christ's teaching, and we will find parallels to them, sometimes better and more wisely expressed, in the utterances of his predecessors. Nor is it true that Christ's teachings have been, or are, the basis of society. Society exists in defiance of them. It is never based, and it never will be based, on any abstract teaching. Its basis is *self-interest*, ever increasing in complexity, and ever more and more illuminated by the growth of knowledge.

Take the case of oaths. Jesus said plainly, "Swear not at all." But when earthly potentates wanted their subjects to swear fidelity, the Christian priests discovered that Jesus meant, "Swear only on special occasions." And it was reserved for an Atheist, in the nineteenth century, to pass an Act allowing Christians to obey Jesus Christ.

Take the injunction, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Society could never exist upon such a basis, so the clergy find that Jesus, like Polonius, spoke tropically. Every Christian is busy laying up treasures on earth, and Archbishop Benson is well to the front in the competition.

Having made ridiculous claims for Jesus Christ, the Archbishop proceeds in this wise: "Next ask yourself whether a stainless, loving, sincere, penetrating person like that makes or enlarges on unfounded declarations as to matters of fact. Is it consistent with such a character?" Now Jesus speaks of "the immense importance of his own person," he speaks of "My flesh, My blood" as of vital power, he says "I and my Father are one." Could he have been deceived? Well, why not? Honesty does not guarantee us against error. The best of men have been mistaken, And sincere natures are most liable to be deceived by taking subjective impressions for external realities.

There is another explanation which the Archbishop

is too shrewd to pass over in silence. Perhaps others said those things for Jesus, perhaps they "attributed to him sayings which he did not utter." But this, the Archbishop says, only multiplies the difficulty and the astonishment; for, to put it briefly, his biographers in that case were as good at predicting and inventing as himself. And why not? Do we not know that the story of the woman taken in adultery, which is finely told, and has all along been thought to contain some of Christ's most characteristic teaching, does not exist in the earlier manuscripts? It was invented by an unknown writer. And if one unknown writer could (and did) invent this story, other unknown writers may have invented every part of the Gospel narratives.

The attempt to make Jesus sponsor for himself is the last refuge of hard-driven Christians. The frame of mind it evinces is seen in Dr. Benson's interpretation of the exclamation "I thirst," ascribed to Jesus on the cross. Crucifixion produced an intolerable thirst, and the exclamation is very natural; but Dr. Benson says that Jesus meant "I thirst for souls," and and adds that "no man can doubt" it. Such are the shifts to which Christians are reduced when they cling to faith in defiance of reason.

Dr. Benson's "living theology" is dead theology. It is sentimentalism and make-believe. Perfectly scriptural doctrines are cast aside while others are arbitrarily retained. Vague talk about "Christ and him crucified" takes the place of time-honored dogmas, logically deduced from the "Word of God," and stamped with the deliberate approval of councils and synods. Christianity, in short, is becoming a matter of personal taste and preference. The time is approaching when every Christian will have a Christianity of his own.

This is the moral of the Archbishop's volume. Had space permitted we should have liked to notice other features of his sermons. In one place he says that "the so-called Secularist is the man who deprives

things secular of all power and meaning and beauty." We think that he deprives Christianity of all meaning, and that being gone its "power" and "beauty" are idle themes of wasted eloquence.

MR. GLADSTONE ON DEVILS.

WHEN the Grand Old Man crossed swords with Professor Huxley on the miracle of Gadara, he spent all his time in discussing whether the pigs belonged to Jews or Gentiles. The more serious point, whether a legion of devils were actually cast out of one or two men and sent into a herd of swine, he sedulously avoided. Professor Huxley, however, is too wide-awake to be drawn off the scent; and while he disputed the points of geography and ethnology, he insisted upon the fact that their only importance was their relation to a miraculous story, which marked the parting of the ways between Science and Christianity.

The demonic theory of disease, including insanity, is universal among savages. For proof and illustration the reader has only to consult Dr. Tylor's splendid work on *Primitive Culture*. There are special demons for every malady, and the way to cure the disease is to cast out the evil spirit. Of course insanity is a striking disorder, and in default of the pathological explanation the savage regards the wild, wandering words and inexplicable actions of the sufferer as the words and actions of a demon, who has taken possession of the man's body, and driven his soul abroad or put it in abeyance. This theory of madness survived through

all the centuries of Christian history until the advent of modern science. Mad people were chained up, exhibited as objects of derision, and often beaten unmercifully. It was the *devil* in them, as in the poor witches, that was treated in this fashion. And it was a recognised part of a clergyman's business to cast out devils. The Church of England canon is still unrepealed which provides that the clergy, before engaging in this useful if not agreeable occupation, must obtain the written authority of their bishops.

Laugh or smile as we will at this superstition, it is an integral part of the New Testament. The demonic theory of disease is confessed in the story of Jesus rebuking the fever of Peter's mother-in-law, so that it left her instantaneously, flying out of the door or window, or up the chimney. Jesus repeatedly cast out devils. He expelled seven, in succession or at one fell swoop, from Mary Magdalene. He turned a legion—that is, several thousands—out of the possessed Gadarenes; there being at least one apiece for the bedevilled swine who were driven to destruction. Paul likewise cast out devils. Indeed, if demonic possession in the New Testament is explained away, there is no reason why every other miraculous element should not be dealt with in the same manner.

Mr. Gladstone perceives this, although he does not commit himself in his *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.* "I am afraid," he says, in a letter to the Rev. J. W. Belcher, "that the objections to demoniacal possession involve in germ the rejection of all belief in the supernatural." This is wonderfully clear and straightforward for the Grand Old Man. Give up the belief that mad people may be tenanted by devils, and and you should immediately join the National ~~Society~~ Secul Society. You have taken the first decisive step on the broad road of "infidelity," and nothing but a want of logic or courage prevents you from hastening to the inevitable conclusion.

Archbishop Trench, in his *Notes on the Miracles of*

Our Lord, rejects the theory that the "demoniacs" were simply insane. No doubt, he says, there was "a substratum of disease, which in many cases helped to lay open the sufferer to the deeper evil." But "our Lord Himself uses language which is not reconcileable" with the naturalist theory. "It may well be a question moreover," says Trench, "if an Apostle, or one with apostolic discernment of spirits, were to enter now into one of our madhouses, how many of the sufferers there he might not recognise as thus having more immediately fallen under the tyranny of the powers of darkness."

Dean Milman, the discreet, plausible, and polished historian of the Christian superstition, did not shrink from regarding the New Testament demoniacs as merely insane; and "nothing was more probable," he remarked, "than that lunacy should take the turn and speak the language of the prevailing superstition of the times." Precisely so. But why did Jesus imitate the lunatics? He addresses the evil spirit and not the madman. "Hold thy peace," he says, "and come out of him." No doubt the demoniacs were simply insane; but in that case Jesus himself was mistaken, or the evangelists put into his mouth words that he never used. The first alternative destroys the divinity of Jesus; the second destroys the authority of the evangelists.

Mr. Gladstone's position is the only honest and logical one for a professed Christian. Demonic possession cannot be cut out of the New Testament without leaving a gap through which all the "infidelity" in the world might pass freely. Devils are not confined to hell. They are commercial travellers in brimstone and mischief. They go home occasionally; the rest of the time they are abroad on business. When they see a promising madman they get inside him, and find warmer quarters than the universal air. Very likely they have started Theosophy, in order to provide themselves with fresh residences.

Little devils of course involve the big Devil—Apollyon, Beelzebub, Abaddon, Satan, Lucifer, Old Nick. He commands the infernal armies, and is one of the deities in Mr. Gladstone's pantheon. He is even embedded in the revised version of the Lord's Prayer—like a fly in amber. "Deliver us from evil" now reads "Deliver us from the Evil One." Thus the Devil triumphs, and the first of living English statesmen is reduced by Christian superstition to the level of modern savages and ancient barbarians. Mr. Gladstone is perhaps the highest type of the Christian statesman. But how small and effeminate he appears, after all, in comparison with a great Pagan statesman like Julius Cæsar, whose brain was free from all superstition! Were the "mighty Julius" to re-appear on earth, and see a great statesman believing the story of devils being turned out of men into pigs, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect in two thousand years.

HUXLEY'S MISTAKE.

No one will suspect us of any prejudice against Professor Huxley. We have often praised his vigorous writings, and his admirable service to Freethought. We recognise him as a powerful fighter in the great battle between Reason and Faith. He is a born controversialist, he revels in the vivisection of a theological opponent, and it is easy to understand how the more placid Darwin could cry to him admiringly, "What a man you are!"

But for some reason or other it seems the fate of Professor Huxley, as it is the fate of Herbert Spencer, to be made use of by the enemies of Freethought; and it must be admitted that, to a certain extent, he gratuitously plays into their hands.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has been a perfect god-send to the Christians with his "Unknowable"—the creation of which was the worst day's work he ever accomplished. It is only a big word, printed with a capital letter, to express the objective side of the relativity of human knowledge. It connotes all that we do not know. It is a mere confession of ignorance; it is hollowness, emptiness, a vacuum, a nothing. And this nothing, which Mr. Spencer adorns with endless quasi-scientific rhetoric, is used as a buttress to prop up tottering Churches.

Professor Huxley has been nearly as serviceable to the Churches with his "Agnosticism," which belongs to the same category of substantially meaningless terms as the "Unknowable." No doubt it serves the turn of a good many feeble sceptics. It sounds less offensive than "Atheism." An Agnostic may safely be invited to dinner, while an Atheist would pocket the spoons. But this pandering to "respectability" is neither in the interest of truth nor in the interest of character. An Atheist is without God; an Agnostic does not know anything about God, so he is without God too. They come to the same thing in the end. An Agnostic is simply an Atheist with a tall hat on. Atheism carries its own name at the Hall of Science; when it occupies a fine house at Eastbourne, and moves in good society, it calls itself Agnosticism. And then the Churches say, "Ah, the true man of science shrinks from Atheism; he is only an Agnostic; he stands reverently in the darkness, waiting for the light."

Nor is this the only way in which Professor Huxley has helped "the enemy." He is, for instance, far too fond of pressing the "possibility" of miracles. We have no right, he says, to declare that miracles are

impossible; it is asserting more than we know, besides begging the question at issue. Perfectly true. But Professor Huxley should remember that he uses "possibility" in one sense and the theologians in another. He uses it theoretically, and they use it practically. They use it where it has a meaning, and he uses it where it has no meaning at all, except in an *à priori* way, like a pair of brackets with nothing between them. When the Agnostic speaks of the "possibility" of miracles, he only means that we cannot prove a universal negative.

Let us take an instance. Suppose some one asserts that a man can jump over the moon. No one can demonstrate that the feat is impossible. It is *possible*, in the sense that *anything* is possible. But this is theoretical logic. According to practical logic it is impossible, in the sense that no rational man would take a ticket for the performance.

Why then does Professor Huxley press the "possibility" of miracles against his Freethinking friends? He is not advancing a step beyond David Hume. He is merely straining logical formulæ in the interest of the Black Army.

Now let us take another instance. In a recent letter to the *Times*, with respect to the famous letter of the thirty-eight clergymen who have given the Bible a fresh certificate, Professor Huxley is once more careful to point out that science knows nothing of "the primal origin" of the universe. But who ever said that it did? Atheists, at any rate, are not aware that the universe ever *had* an origin. As to the "ultimate cause of the evolutionary process," it seems to us mere metaphysical jargon, as intolerable as anything in the sounding phraseology of the theologians.

But this is not all. Professor Huxley delivers himself of the following utterance: "In fact it requires some depth of philosophical incapacity to suppose that there is any logical antagonism between Theism and the doctrine of Evolution." This is food and drink to

a paper like the *Christian World.* But what does it mean? Certainly there is no antagonism between the terms "Theism" and "Evolution." They do not fight each other in the dictionary. But is there not antagonism between Evolution and any kind of Theism yet formulated? The word "God" means anything or nothing. Give your God attributes, and see if they are consistent with Evolution. That is the only way to decide whether there is any "logical antagonism" between Evolution and Theism. The trouble begins when you are "logical" enough to deal in definitions; and the only definition of God that will stand the test of Evolution is "a sort of a something."

We leave Professor Huxley to present that highly edifying Theistic conclusion to his old theological opponents, and, if he likes, to flaunt it in the faces of his Freethinking friends. But is it really worth while for Samson to grind chaff for the Philistines? We put the question to Professor Huxley with all seriousness. Let him teach truth and smite falsehood, without spending so much time in showing that they harmonise when emptied of practical meaning. A sovereign and a feather fall with equal rapidity in a vacuum; and if you take away fact and experience, one proposition is as "possible" as another. But why should a great man waste his energies in propagating such a barren truism?

THE GOSPEL OF FREETHOUGHT.

CHRISTIANS are perpetually crying that we destroy and never build up. Nothing could be more false, for all negation has a positive side, and we cannot deny error without affirming truth. But even if it were true, it would not lessen the value of our work. You must clear the ground before you can build, and plough before you sow. Splendor gives no strength to an edifice whose foundations are treacherous, nor can a harvest be reaped from fields unprepared for the seed.

Freethought is, in this respect, like a skilful physician, whose function it is to expel disease and leave the patient sound and well. No sick man claims that the doctor shall supply him with something in place of his malady. It is enough that the enemy of his health is driven out. He is then in a position to act for himself. He has legs to walk with, a brain to devise, and hands to execute his will. What more does he need? What more can he ask without declaring himself a weakling or a fool? So it is with superstition, the deadliest disease of the mind. Freethought casts it out, with its blindness and its terrors, and leaves the mind clear and free. All nature is then before us to study and enjoy. Truth shines on us with celestial light, Goodness smiles on our best endeavors, and Beauty thrills our senses and kindles our imagination with the subtle magic of her charms.

What a boon it is to think freely, to let the intellect dart out in quest of truth at every point of the compass, to feel the delight of the chase and the gladness of capture! What a noble privilege to pour treasures of knowledge into the alembic of the brain, and separate the gold from the dross!

The Freethinker takes nothing on trust, if he can help it; he dissects, analyses, and proves everything. Does this make him a barren sceptic? Not so. What he discards he knows to be worthless, and he also knows the value of what he prizes. If one sweet vision turns out a mirage, how does it lessen our enjoyment at the true oasis, or shake our certitude of water and shade under the palm-trees by the well?

The masses of men do not think freely. They scarcely think at all out of their round of business. They are trained not to think. From the cradle to the grave orthodoxy has them in its clutches. Their religion is settled by priests, and their political and social institutions by custom. They look askance at the man who dares to question what is established, not reflecting that all orthodoxies were once heterodox, that without innovation there could never have been any progress, and that if inquisitive fellows had not gone prying about in forbidden quarters ages ago, the world would still be peopled by savages dressed in nakedness, war-paint, and feathers. The mental stultification which begins in youth reaches ossification as men grow older. Lack of thought ends in incapacity to think.

Real Freethought is impossible without education. The mind cannot operate without means or construct without materials. Theology opposes education: Freethought supports it. The poor as well as the rich should share in its blessings. Education is a social capital which should be supplied to all. It enriches and expands. It not only furnishes the mind, but strengthens its faculties. Knowledge is power. A race of giants could not level the Alps; but ordinary men, equipped with science, bore through their base, and make easy channels for the intercourse of divided nations.

Growth comes with use, and power with exercise. Education makes both possible. It puts the means of salvation at the service of all, and prevents the faculties

from moving about *in vacuo*, and finally standing still from sheer hopelessness. The educated man has a whole magazine of appliances at his command, and his intellect is trained in using them, while the uneducated man has nothing but his strength, and his training is limited to its use.

Freethought demands education for all. It claims a mental inheritance for every child born into the world. Superstition demands ignorance, stupidity, and degradation. Wherever the schoolmaster is busy, Freethought prospers; where he is not found, superstition reigns supreme and levels the people in the dust.

Free speech and Freethought go together. If one is hampered the other languishes. What is the use of thinking if I may not express my thought? We claim equal liberty for all. The priest shall say what he believes and so shall the sceptic. No law shall protect the one and disfranchise the other. If any man disapproves what I say, he need not hear me a second time. What more does he require? Let him listen to what he likes, and leave others to do the same. Let us have justice and fair play all round.

Freethought is not only useful but laudable. It involves labor and trouble. Ours is not a gospel for those who love the soft pillow of faith. The Freethinker does not let his ship rot away in harbor; he spreads his canvas and sails the seas of thought. What though tempests beat and billows roar? He is undaunted, and leaves the avoidance of danger to the sluggard and the slave. He will not pay their price for ease and safety. Away he sails with Vigilance at the prow and Wisdom at the helm. He not only traverses the ocean highways, but skirts unmapped coasts and ventures on uncharted seas. He gathers spoils in every zone, and returns with a rich freight that compensates for all hazards. Some day or other, you say, he will be shipwrecked and lost. Perhaps. All things end somehow. But if he goes down he will die like a man and not like a coward,

and have for his requiem the psalm of the tempest and the anthem of the waves.

Doubt is the beginning of wisdom. It means caution, independence, honesty and veracity. Faith means negligence, serfdom, insincerity and deception. The man who never doubts never thinks. He is like a straw in the wind or a waif on the sea. He is one of the helpless, docile, unquestioning millions, who keep the world in a state of stagnation, and serve as a fulcrum for the lever of despotism. The stupidity of the people, says Whitman, is always inviting the insolence of power.

Buckle has well said that scepticism is "the necessary antecedent of all progress." Without it we should still be groping in the night of the Dark Ages. The very foundations of modern science and philosophy were laid on ground which was wrested from the Church, and every stone was cemented with the blood of martyrs. As the edifice arose the sharpshooters of faith attacked the builders at every point, and they still continue their old practice, although their missiles can hardly reach the towering heights where their enemies are now at work.

Astronomy was opposed by the Church because it unsettled old notions of the earth being the centre of the universe, and the sun, moon, and stars mere lights stuck in the solid firmament, and worked to and fro like sliding panels. Did not the Bible say that General Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and how could this have happened unless it moved round the earth? And was not the earth certainly flat, as millions of flats believed it to be? The Catholic Inquisition forced Galileo to recant, and Protestant Luther called Copernicus "an old fool."

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of God. It was put in the same class with sorcery and witchcraft, and punished in the same way. The early chemists were regarded as agents of the Devil, and their successors are still regarded as "un-

canny" in the more ignorant parts of Christendom. Roger Bacon was persecuted by his brother monks; his testing fire was thought to have come from the pit, and the explosion of his gunpowder was the Devil vanishing in smoke and smell. Even at the end of last century, the clergy-led mob of Birmingham who wrecked Priestley's house and destroyed his apparatus, no doubt felt that there was a close connection between chemistry and infidelity.

Physiology and Medicine were opposed on similar grounds. We were all fearfully and wonderfully made, and the less the mystery was looked into the better. Disease was sent by God for his own wise ends, and to resist it was as bad as blasphemy. Every discovery and every reform was decried as impious. Men now living can remember how the champions of faith denounced the use of anæsthetics in painful labor as an interference with God's curse on the daughters of Eve.

Geology was opposed because it discredited Moses, as though that famous old Jew had watched the deposit of every stratum of the earth's crust. It was even said that fossils had been put underground by God to puzzle the wiseacres, and that the Devil had carried shells to the hill-tops for the purpose of deluding men to infidelity and perdition. Geologists were anathematised from the pulpits and railed at by tub-thumpers. They were obliged to feel their way and go slowly. Sir Charles Lyell had to keep back his strongest conclusions for at least a quarter of a century, and could not say all he thought until his head was whitened by old age and he looked into the face of Death.

Biology was opposed tooth and nail as the worst of all infidelity. It exposed Genesis and put Moses out of court. It destroyed all special creation, showed man's kinship with other forms of life, reduced Adam and Eve to myths, and exploded the doctrine of the Fall. Darwin was for years treated as Antichrist, and Huxley as the great beast. All that is being changed, thanks to the sceptical spirit. Darwin's corpse is buried in

Westminster Abbey, but his ideas are undermining all the churches and crumbling them into dust.

The gospel of Freethought brands persecution as the worst crime against humanity. It stifles the spirit of progress and strangles its pioneers. It eliminates the brave, the adventurous and the aspiring, and leaves only the timid, the sluggish and the grovelling. It removes the lofty and spares the low. It levels all the hills of thought and makes an intellectual flatness. It drenches all the paths of freedom with blood and tears, and makes earth the vestibule of hell.

Persecution is the right arm of priestcraft. The black militia of theology are the sworn foes of Freethought. They represent it as the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no forgiveness in this world or the next. When they speak of the Holy Ghost they mean themselves. Freethought is a crime against *them*. It strips off the mystery that invests their craft, and shows them as they really are, a horde of bandits who levy black mail on honest industry, and preach a despot in heaven in order to maintain their own tyranny on earth.

The gospel of Freethought would destroy all priesthoods. Every man should be his own priest. If a professional soul-doctor gives you wrong advice and leads you to ruin, he will not be damned for you. He will see you so first. We must take all responsibility, and we should also take the power. Instead of putting our thinking out, as we put our washing, let us do it at home. No man can do another's thinking for him. What is thought in the originator is only acquiescence in the man who takes it at secondhand.

If we do our own thinking in religion we shall do it in everything else. We reject authority and act for ourselves. Spiritual and temporal power are brought under the same rule. They must justify themselves or go. The Freethinker is thus a politician and a social reformer. What a Christian *may* be he *must* be. Freethinkers are naturally Radicals. They are almost to a

man on the side of justice, freedom and progress. The Tories know this, and hence they seek to suppress us by the violence of unjust law. They see that we are a growing danger to every kind of privilege, a menace to all the idle classes who live in luxury on the sweat and labor of others—the devouring drones who live on the working bees.

The gospel of Freethought teaches us to distinguish between the knowable and the unknowable. We cannot fathom the infinite "mystery of the universe" with our finite plummet, nor see aught behind the veil of death. Here is our appointed province:

> This world which is the world
> Of all of us, and where in the end
> We find our happiness or not at all.

Let us make the best of this world and take our chance of any other. If there is a heaven, we dare say it will hold all honest men. If it will not, those who go elsewhere will at least be in good company.

Our salvation is here and now. It is certain and not contingent. We need not die before we realise it. Ours is a gospel, and the only gospel, for this side of the grave. The promises of theology cannot be made good till after death; ours are all redeemable in this life.

We ask men to acknowledge realities and dismiss fictions. When you have sifted all the learned sermons ever preached, you will find very little good grain. Theology deals with dreams and phantasies, and gives no guidance to practical men. The whole truth of life may be summed up in a few words. Happiness is the only good, suffering the only evil, and selfishness the only sin. And the whole duty of man may be expressed in one sentence, slightly altered from Voltaire—Learn what is true in order to do what is right. If a man can tell you anything about these matters, listen to him; if not, turn a deaf ear, and let him preach to the wind.

The only noble things in this world are great hearts and great brains. There is no virtue in a starveling piety which turns all beauty into ugliness and shrivels up every natural affection. Let the heart beat high with courage and enterprise, and throb with warm passion. Let the brain be an active engine of thought, imagination and will. The gospel of sorrow has had its day; the time has come for the gospel of gladness. Let us live out our lives to the full, radiating joy on all in our own circle, and diffusing happiness through the grander circle of humanity, until at last we retire from the banquet of life, as others have done before us, and sink in eternal repose.

ON RIDICULE.

GOLDSMITH said there are two classes of people who dread ridicule—priests and fools. They cry out that it is no argument, but they know it is. It has been found the most potent form of argument. Euclid used it in his immortal Geometry; for what else is the *reductio ad absurdum* which he sometimes employs? Elijah used it against the priests of Baal. The Christian fathers found it effective against the Pagan superstitions, and in turn it was adopted as the best weapon of attack on *them* by Lucian and Celsus. Ridicule has been used by Bruno, Erasmus, Luther, Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire, by nearly all the great emancipators of the human mind.

All these men used it for a serious purpose. They were not comedians who amused the public for pence.

They wielded ridicule as a keen rapier, more swift and fatal than the heaviest battle-axe. Terrible as was the levin-brand of their denunciation, it was less dreaded than the Greek fire of their sarcasm. I repeat that they were men of serious aims, and indeed how could they have been otherwise? All true and lasting wit is founded on a basis of seriousness; or else, as Heine said, it is nothing but a sneeze of the reason. Hood felt the same thing when he proposed for his epitaph: "Here lies one who made more puns, and spat more blood, than any other man of his time."

Buckle well says, in his fine vindication of Voltaire, that he "used ridicule, not as the test of truth, but as the scourge of folly." And he adds—

"His irony, his wit, his pungent and telling sarcasms, produced more effect than the gravest arguments could have done; and there can be no doubt that he was fully justified in using those great resources with which nature had endowed him, since by their aid he advanced the interests of truth, and relieved men from some of their most inveterate prejudices."

Victor Hugo puts it much better in his grandiose way, when he says of Voltaire that "he was irony incarnate for the salvation of mankind."

Voltaire's opponents, as Buckle points out, had a foolish reverence for antiquity, and they were impervious to reason. To compare great things with small, our opponents are of the same character. Grave argument is lost upon them; it runs off them like water from a duck. When we approach the mysteries of their faith in a spirit of reverence, we yield them half the battle. We must concede them nothing. What they call reverence is only conventional prejudice. It must be stripped away from the subject, and if argument will not remove the veil, ridicule will. Away with the insane notion that absurdity is reverend because it is ancient! If it is thousands of years old, treat it exactly as if it were told the first time to-day. Science recognises nothing in space and time to invali-

date the laws of nature. They prevailed in the past as well as in the present, in Jerusalem as well as in London. That is how Science regards everything; and at bottom Science and common-sense are one and the same.

Professor Huxley, in his admirable little book on Hume, after pointing out the improbability of centaurs, says that judged by the canons of science all "miracles" are centaurs. He also considers what would happen if he were told by the greatest anatomist of the age that he had seen a centaur. He admits that the weight of such authority would stagger him, but it would scarcely make him believe. "I could get no further," says Huxley, "than a suspension of judgment."

Now I venture to say that if Johannes Müller had told Huxley any such thing, he would have at once concluded that the great anatomist was joking or suffering from hallucination. As a matter of fact trained investigators do not see these incredible monstrosities, and Huxley's hypothetical case goes far beyond every attested miracle. But I do say that if Johannes Müller, or anyone else, alleged that he had seen a centaur, Huxley would never think of investigating the absurdity.

Yet the allegation of a great anatomist on such a matter is infinitely more plausible than any miraculous story of the Christian religion. The "centaurs" of faith were seen centuries ago by superstitious people; and what is more, the relation of them was never made by the witnesses, but always by other people, who generally lived a few generations at least after the time.

What on earth are we to do with people who believe in "centaurs" on such evidence, who make laws to protect their superstition, and appoint priests at the public cost to teach the "centaur" science? The way to answer this question is to ask another. How should we treat people who believed that centaurs could be seen now? Why, of course, we should laugh at them.

And that is how we should treat people who believe that men-horses ever existed at all.

Does anybody ask that I shall seriously discuss whether an old woman with a divining-rod can detect hidden treasures; whether Mr. Home floated in the air or Mrs. Guppy sailed from house to house; whether cripples are cured at Lourdes or all manner of diseases at Winifred's Well? Must I patiently reason with a man who tells me that he saw water turned into wine, or a few loaves and fishes turned into a feast for multitudes, or dead men rise up from their graves? Surely not. I do what every sensible man does. I recognise no obligation to reason with such hallucinate mortals; I simply treat them with ridicule.

So with the past. Its delusions are no more entitled to respect than those of to-day. Jesus Christ as a miracle-worker is just as absurd as any modern pretender. Whether in the Bible, the Koran, the Arabian Nights, Monte Christo, or Baron Munchausen, a tremendous "walker" is the fit subject of a good laugh. And Freethinkers mean to enjoy their laugh, as some consolation for the wickedness of superstition. The Christian faith is such that it makes us laugh or cry. Are we wrong in preferring to laugh?

There is an old story of a man who was plagued by the Devil. The fiend was always dropping in at inconvenient times, and making the poor fellow's life a hell on earth. He sprinkled holy water on the floor, but by-and-bye the "old 'un" hopped about successfully on the dry spots. He flung things at him, but all in vain. At last he resolved on desperate measures. He plucked up his courage, looked the Devil straight in the face, and laughed at him. That ended the battle. The Devil could not stand laughter. He fled that moment and never returned.

Superstition is the Devil. Treat him to a hearty wholesome laugh. It is the surest exorcism, and you will find laughter medicinal for mind and body too. Ridicule, and again ridicule, and ever ridicule!

WHO ARE THE BLASPHEMERS?

ATHEISTS are often charged with blasphemy, but it is a crime they cannot commit. God is to them merely a word, expressing all sorts of ideas, and not a person. It is, properly speaking, a general term, which includes all that there is in common among the various deities of the world. The idea of the supernatural embodies itself in a thousand ways. Truth is always simple and the same, but error is infinitely diverse. Jupiter, Jehovah, and Mumbo-Jumbo are alike creations of human fancy, the products of ignorance and wonder. Which is *the* God is not yet settled. When the sects have decided this point, the question may take a fresh turn; but until then *god* must be considered as a generic term, like *tree* or *horse* or *man;* with just this difference, however, that while the words tree, horse, and man express the general qualities of visible objects, the word god expresses only the imagined qualities of something that nobody has ever seen.

When the Atheist examines, denounces, or satirises the gods, he is not dealing with persons but with ideas. He is incapable of insulting God, for he does not admit the existence of any such being.

Ideas of god may be good or bad, beautiful or ugly; and according as he finds them the Atheist treats them. If we lived in Turkey, we should deal with the god of the Koran; but as we live in England, we deal with the god of the Bible. We speak of that god as a being, just for convenience sake, and not from conviction. At bottom, we admit nothing but the mass of contradictory notions between Genesis and Revelation. We attack not a person but a belief, not a being but an idea, not a fact but a fancy.

Lord Brougham long ago pointed out, in his *Life of Voltaire*, that the great French heretic was not guilty

of blasphemy, as his enemies alleged; since he had no belief in the actual existence of the god he dissected, analysed, and laughed at. Mr. Ruskin very eloquently defends Byron from the same charge. In *Cain* and elsewhere, the great poet does not impeach God; he merely impeaches the orthodox creed. We may sum up the whole matter briefly. No man satirises the god he believes in, and no man believes in the god he satirises.

We shall not, therefore, be deterred by the cry of "blasphemy!" which is exactly what the Jewish priests shouted against Jesus Christ. If there is a God, he cannot be half such a fool and blackguard as the Bible declares. In destroying the counterfeit we do not harm the reality. And as it is better, in the words of Plutarch, to have no notion of the gods than to have notions which dishonor them, we are satisfied that the Lord (if he exist) will never burn us in hell for denying a few lies told in his name.

The real blasphemers are those who believe in God and blacken his character; who credit him with less knowledge than a child, and less intelligence than an idiot; who make him quibble, deceive, and lie; who represent him as indecent, cruel, and revengeful; who give him the heart of a savage and the brain of a fool. These are the blasphemers.

When the priest steps between husband and wife, with the name of God on his lips, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he resists education and science, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he opposes freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he robs, tortures, and kills those who differ from him, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he opposes the equal rights of all, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he preaches content to the poor and oppressed, flatters the rich and powerful, and makes religious tyranny the handmaiden of political privilege, he blasphemes. And when he takes the Bible in his

hand, and says it was written by the inspiration of God, he blasphemes almost beyond forgiveness.

Who are the blasphemers? Not we who preach freedom and progress for all men; but those who try to bind the world with chains of dogma, to burden it, in God's name, with all the foul superstitions of its ignorant past.

CHRISTIANITY AND COMMON SENSE.

THERE are two things in the world that can never get on together—religion and common sense. Religion deals with the next life, common sense with this; religion points to the sky, common sense to the earth; religion is all imagination, common sense all reason; religion deals with what nobody can understand, common sense with what everybody can understand; religion gives us no return for our investments but flash notes on the bank of expectation, common sense gives us good interest and full security for our capital. They are as opposite as two things can possibly be, and they are always at strife. Religion is always trying to fill the world with delusions, and common sense is always trying to drive them away. Religion says Live for the next world, and common sense says Live for this.

It is in the very nature of things that religion and common sense should hate and oppose each other. They are rivals for the same prize—aspirants to the same throne. In every age a conflict has been going on between them; and although common sense is fast

getting the upper hand to-day, the war is far from ended, and we may see some fierce struggles before the combat closes. There can, however, be no doubt as to the issue; for science has appeared on the scene with the most deadly weapons of destruction, and science is the sworn ally of common sense. Nay, is not Science the mighty child of common sense—the fruit of Reason from the lusty embrace of Nature?

Common sense is primitive logic. It does not depend on books, and it is superior to culture. It is the perception of analogy—the instinct of causation. It guides the savage through trackless forests, and the astronomer through infinite space. It makes the burnt child dread the fire, and a Darwin see in a few obvious facts the solution of a mystery. It built the first hut and the last palace; the first canoe and the last ocean steamer. It constructed docks, and laid down railways, applied steam to machinery and locomotion, prompted every mechanical discovery, instigated all material progress, and transformed an ape-like beast into a civilised man.

Even the highest art is full of common sense. Sanity and simplicity are the distinguishing marks of the loftiest genius, which may be described as inspired common sense. The great artist never loses touch of fact; he may let his imagination soar as high as the stars, but he keeps his feet firm-planted on the ground. All the world recognises the sublimity of Greek sculpture and Shakespeare's plays, because they are both true to nature and fact and coincident with everlasting laws. The true sublime is not fantastic; it is solid and satisfying, like a mighty Alp, deep-rooted first of all in the steadfast earth, and then towering up with its vineyards, its pastures, its pine-forests, its glaciers, its precipices, and last of all the silence of infinitude brooding over its eternal snows.

Common sense, the civiliser, has had an especially hard fight with that particular form of religion known as Christianity. When Tertullian said that Chris-

tianity was to be believed because it was incredible, he spoke in the true spirit of faith; just as old Sir Thomas Browne did when he found the marvels of religion too weak for his credulity. David Hume expressed the same truth ironically at the conclusion of his *Essay on Miracles*, when he said that it was not reason that persuaded any Christian of the truth of his creed, which was established on the higher ground of faith, and could not be accepted without a miracle.

Common sense is blasphemy. It is the thing which religion dreads most, and which the priests most mortally hate. Common sense dispenses with learned disquisitions, and tries everything with simple mother wit. If, for instance, it hears that a whale swallowed a man, and vomited him up safe and sound three days after, it does not want to know all the physiology of men and whales before deciding if the story is true; it just indulges in a hearty laugh and blows the story to Hades. Miracle-mongers are quite helpless when a man turns round and says, "My dear sir, that story's just a trifle too thin." They see his case is a hopeless one, and leave him to the tender mercies of the Lord of Hosts.

Learning is all very well in its way, but common sense is a great deal better. It is infinitely the best weapon to use against Christianity. Without a knowledge of history, without being acquainted with any science but that of daily life, without a command of Hebrew, Latin and Greek, or any other language than his own, a plain man can take the Bible in his hand and easily satisfy himself it is not the word of God. Common sense tells him not to believe in contradictory statements; common sense tells him that a man could not have found a wife in a land where there were no women; common sense tells him that three millions of people never marched out of any country in one night; common sense tells him that Jesus Christ could not have "gone up" from two places at once; common sense tells him that turning devils out of men

into pigs is a fable not half as good as the poorest of Æsop's; common sense tells him that nobody but a skunk would consent to be saved from the penalty of his own misdeeds by the sufferings of an innocent man; common sense tells him that while men object to having their pockets picked and their throats cut, they want no divine command against theft and murder; common sense tells him that God never ordered the committal of such atrocities as those ascribed to him in the Bible; and common sense tells him that a God of mercy never made a hell.

Yes, all this is perfectly clear, and the priests know it. That is why they cry out Blasphemy! every time they meet it. But that is also precisely the reason why we should employ it against them. The best antidote to superstition, the worst enemy of priest-craft, and the best friend of man, is (to parody Danton's famous formula) Common Sense, and again Common Sense, and for ever Common Sense.

THE LORD OF LORDS.*

We are in the midst of a political crisis. The House of Lords opposes a reform unanimously voted by the House of Commons. Great demonstrations are being held all over the country, to insist on the popular will being carried into effect, and there is a growing cry of "Down with the Lords." A spectator from another planet might wonder at all the fuss. He might marvel how forty millions of people needed to stamp and

* Written in August, 1884.

gesticulate against a handful of obstructives. He might imagine that they had only to decree a thing and it would immediately be; that all opposition to their sovereign will would melt away the moment they declared it. This traveller, however, would soon be undeceived. A little study would show him that the people are kept in check by faith and custom. He would learn that the nation is tied down like Gulliver was, by ligatures springing from its own head. Behind the King there is a King of Kings; behind the Lords there is a Lord of Lords. Behind every earthly despotism there is a heavenly one. The rulers of mankind overawe the people by religious terrors. They keep a body of men in their pay, the black army of theology, whose business it is to frighten people from their rights by means of a ghost behind the curtain. Nobody has ever seen the bogie, but we are taught to believe in it from our infancy, and faith supplies the deficiencies of sight. Thus we are enslaved by our own consent. Our will is suborned against our interests. We wear no chains to remind us of our servitude, but our liberty is restrained by the subtle web of superstition, which is so fine as to be imperceptible except to keen and well-practised eyes, and elastic enough to cheat us with a false sense of freedom.

Yes, we must seek in religion the secret of all political tyranny and social injustice. Not only does history show us the bearing of religion on politics—we see it to-day wherever we cast our gaze. Party feeling is so embittered in France because the sharp line of division in politics corresponds with the sharp line of division in religion. On the one side there is Freethought and Republicanism, and on the other Catholicism and Monarchy. Even in England, which at present knows less of the naked despotism of the Catholic Church than any other European country, we are gradually approximating to a similar state of things. Freethought is appearing upon the public

stage, and will play its peculiar part as naturally as religion does. Those who fancy that theology and politics have no necessary relations, that you may operate in the one without affecting the other, and that they can and should be kept distinct, are grossly mistaken. Cardinal Newman has well shown how it is the nature of ideas to assimilate to themselves whatever agrees with them, and to destroy whatever disagrees. When once an idea enters the human mind it acts according to the necessary laws of thought. It changes to its own complexion all its mental surroundings, and through every mental and moral channel influences the world of practice outside. The real sovereigns of mankind, who sway its destinies with irresistible power, are not the czars, emperors, kings and lords, nor even the statesmen who enact laws when public sentiment is ripe; they are the great thinkers who mould opinion, the discoverers and enunciators of Truth, the men of genius who pour the leaven of their ideas and enthusiasm into the sluggish brain of humanity.

Even in this crisis it is easy to see how Religion and Freethought are at variance. The Liberal party is not pledged to the abolition of the House of Lords, but the Radical party is. Orthodox Liberalism is Christian, only a little less so than orthodox Conservatism; but Radicalism is very largely sceptical. It would surprise the dullards of both parties to learn how great a portion of the working energy of Radicalism is supplied by Freethinkers. True, many of them are unavowed Freethinkers, yet they are of our party although they do not wear our colors. But setting all these aside, I assert that Radicalism would be immensely weakened by the withdrawal of declared Freethinkers from its ranks. No one in the least acquainted with political organisation would think of disputing this.

Belief in God is the source and principle of all tyranny. This lies in the very nature of things.

For what is God? All definitions of religion from Johnson's down to that of the latest dictionary agree on this one point, that it is concerned with man's relations to *the unknown*. Yes, God is the Unknown, and theology is the science of ignorance. Earl Beaconsfield, in his impish way, once said that where our knowleege ends our religion begins. A truer word was never spoken.

Now the unknown is the terrible. We become fearful the moment we confront the incalculable. Go through the history of religions, consult the various accounts of savage and barbarous faiths at present extant, and you will find that the principle of terror, springing from the unknown, is the essential feature in which they all agree. This terror inevitably begets slavishness. We cannot be cowardly in this respect without its affecting our courage in others. The mental serf is a bodily serf too, and spiritual fetters are the agencies of political thraldom. The man who worships a tyrant in heaven naturally submits his neck to the yoke of tyrants on earth. He who bows his intellect to a priest will yield his manhood to a king. Everywhere on earth we find the same ceremonies attending every form of dependence. The worshipper who now kneels in prayer to God, like the courtier who backs from the presence of the monarch, is performing an apology for the act of prostration which took place alike before the altar and the throne. In both cases it was the adoration of fear, the debasement of the weak before the seat of irresponsible power.

Authority is still the principle of our most refined creeds. The majority of Christians believe in salvation by faith; and what is the God of that dogma but a capricious tyrant, who saves or damns according to his personal whim? The ministers of Protestantism, like the priests of Catholicism, recognise this practically in their efforts to regulate public education. They dare not trust to the effect of persuasion on the

unprejudiced mind; they must bias the minds of children by means of dogmatic teaching. They bend the twig in order to warp the tree.

Now God is the supreme principle of authority as he is the essence of the unknown. He is thus the head, front and symbol of terror and slavery, and as such must be assailed by every true soldier of Progress. We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions; and even if we abolish the House of Lords we shall still dwell in the house of bondage unless we abolish the Lord of Lords; for the evil principle will remain as a germ to develop into new forms of oppression.

Freethought is the real Savior. When we make a man a Freethinker, we need not trouble greatly about his politics. He is sure to go right in the main. He may mistake here or falter there, but his tendency will always be sound. Thus it is that Freethinkers always vote, work and fight for the popular cause. They have discarded the principle of authority in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and left it to the Conservative party, to which all religionists belong precisely in proportion to the orthodoxy of their faith. Freethought goes to the root. It reaches the intellect and the conscience, and does not merely work at haphazard on the surface of our material interests and party struggles. It aims at the destruction of all tyranny and injustice by the sure methods of investigation and discussion, and the free play of mind on every subject. It loves Truth and Freedom. It turns away from the false and sterile ideas of the Kingdom of God and faces the true and fruitful idea of the Republic of Man.

CONSECRATING THE COLORS.

THE Queen has recently presented new colors to the first battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders. There was a great parade at Osborne, half the royal family being present to witness her Majesty perform the one piece of business to which she takes kindly in her old age. She has long been, as Lord Beaconsfield said, physically and morally unfit for her many duties; but she is always ready to inspect her troops, to pin a medal or a cross on the breast of that cheap form of valor which excites such admiration in feminine minds, or to thank her brave warriors for exhibiting their heroism on foreign fields against naked savages and half-naked barbarians. The ruling passion holds out strong to the last, and the respectable old lady who is allowed to occupy the English throne because of her harmlessness can still sing, like the Grand Duchess in Offenbach's opera, "Oh, I dote on the military."

But the Queen is not my game. I am "going for" the priests behind her, the mystery-men who give the sanction of religion to all the humbug and hypocrisy, as well as to all the plunder and oppression, that obtain amongst us. Those new colors were consecrated (that is the word) by the Dean of Windsor. The old colors were consecrated forty-two years ago by the Venerable Dr. Vernon Harcourt, Archbishop of York, who was probably a near relative of our pious Home Secretary, the fat member for Derby. If I were a courtier, a sycophant, or an ordinary journalist, I might spend some time in hunting up the actual relationship between these two Harcourts; but being neither, and not caring a straw one way or the other, I content myself, as I shall probably content my readers, with hazarding a conjecture.

Consecrating the colors! What does that mean? First of all it implies the alliance between the soldier and the priest, who are the two arms of tyranny. One holds and the other strikes; one guards and the other attacks; one overawes with terror and delusion, and the other smites with material weapons when the spiritual restraints fail. The black and the red armies are both retainers in the service of Privilege, and they preach or fight exactly as they are bidden. It makes no real difference that the soldier's orders are clear and explicit, while the priest's are mysteriously conveyed through secret channels. They alike obey the mandate of their employers, and take their wages for the work.

In the next place it shows the intimate relation between religion and war. Both belong to the age of faith. When the age of reason has fairly dawned both will be despised and finally forgotten. They are always and everywhere founded on ignorance and stupidity, although they are decorated with all sorts of fine names. The man of sense sees through all these fine disguises. He knows that the most ignorant people are the most credulous, and that the most stupid are the most pugnacious. Educated and thoughtful men shrink alike from the dogmas of religion and the brutalities of war.

Further, this consecration of the colors reminds us that the Christian deity is still the lord of hosts, the god of battles. His eyes delight to look over a purple sea of blood, and his devotees never invoke his name so much as when they are about to emulate his sanguinary characteristics. The Dean of Windsor does not shock, he only gratifies, the feelings of the orthodox world, when he blesses the flag which is to float over scenes of carnage, and flame like a fiend's tongue over the hell of battle, where brothers of the same human family, without a quarrel in the world, but set at variance by thieves and tricksters, maim and mangle and kill each other with fractricidal hands, which ought to have been clasped in friendship and brotherhood.

Yet these hireling priests, who consecrate the banners of war, dare to prate that God is a loving father and that we are all his children. What monstrous absurdity! What disgusting hypocrisy! Surely the parent of mankind, instead of allowing his ministers to mouth his name over the symbols of slaughter, would command them to preach "peace, peace!"

Until the war-drums beat no louger and the battle-flags are furled
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

Of course there is a comic side to this, as to almost everything else. The priests of the various nations consecrate rival banners, pray for victory for their own side, and swear that God Almighty is sure to give it them if they trust in him. Now what is the Lord to do when they go on in this way on opposite sides? He is sure to disappoint one party, and he is likely to get devilish little thanks from the other. A wise God would remain neutral, and say, "My comical little fellows, if you will go knocking out each other's brains because they are not strong enough to settle your differences by peaceful means, by all means get through the beastly business as soon as possible; but pray don't trouble me with your petitions for assistance; both sides are fools, and I wash my hands of the whole affair."

I have heard of an old Dutch commander who actually prayed the Lord to remain neutral, although from a different motive. On the eve of battle he addressed the deity in this fashion: "O Lord, we are ten thousand, and they are ten thousand, but we are a darned sight better soldiers than they, and, O Lord, do thou but keep out of it, and we'll give them the soundest thrashing they ever had."

Our Prayer Book pays a very poor compliment to the god of battles. "Give peace in our time, O Lord," says the preacher. "Because there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou O God," responds the congregation. The compilers of the Prayer Book evidently blundered, unless they secretly felt that the

Lord of hosts was used up, and not worth a keg of gunpowder or an old musket.

Consecrating colors, like consecrating graveyards, is after all only a trick of trade. The Dean of Windsor only practises the arts of his profession, and probably laughs in his sleeve at his own public performance. Perhaps he knows that God, as Napoleon said, is on the side of the big battalions; just as, probably, every bishop knows that Church corpses rot exactly like Dissenting corpses, although they lie in consecrated ground. Priestly mummeries will last as long as there is a demand for them. It is of little use to quarrel with the supply. The Freethinker's duty is to lessen the demand.

CHRISTMAS IN HOLLOWAY GAOL.*

THE dullest Christmas I ever spent was in her Majesty's hotel in North London. The place was spacious, but not commodious; it was magnificent in the mass, but very petty in detail; it was designed with extreme care for the safety of its many guests, but with a complete disregard of their comfort; and it soon palled upon the taste, despite the unremitting attentions of a host of liveried servants. How I longed for a change of scene, if what I constantly gazed upon may be so described; but I was like a knight in some enchanted castle, surrounded with attendants, yet not at liberty to walk out. The hospitality of my residence, however, was by no

* I was imprisoned there for "blasphemy" from February 1883 to February 1884, by sentence of a Roman Catholic judge, Mr. Justice North.

means sumptuous. The table did not groan beneath a weight of viands, or gleam with glowing wines. Its poverty was such that a red-herring would have been a glorious treat, and a dose of physic an agreeable variety. Why then, you may ask, did I not quit this inhospitable hotel, and put up at another establishment? Because I was invited by her Majesty, and her Majesty's invitations are commands.

Speaking by the card, Christmas-day in Holloway was treated as a Sunday. There was no work and no play then, the dinner was the poorest and worst cooked in the whole week, and the only diversion was a morning or afternoon visit to chapel, where we had the satisfaction of learning that heaven was an eternal Sunday.

The fibre put into my cell to be picked by my industrious fingers had all been removed the previous evening, lest I should desecrate the sacred day by pursuing my ordinary avocation. My apartment was therefore clean and tidy, and by the aid of a bit of dubbin I managed to give an air of newness to my well-worn shoes. The attendants had, however, omitted to provide me with a Sunday suit, so I was obliged to don my working clothes, in which graceless costume I had to perform my religious devotions in the house of God, where an ill-dressed person is always regarded as an exceptionally bad sinner, and expected to show an extraordinary amount of humility and contrition. Linen was never a burning question in Holloway Hotel, and cuffs and collars were unknown, except when a short guest wore a long shirt. My toilet was therefore easily completed; and with a good wash, and the energetic use of a three-inch comb, I was soon ready for the festivities of the season.

At eight o'clock I received the first instalment of my Christmas fare, in the shape of three-quarters of a pint of tea and eight ounces of dry bread. Whether the price of groceries was affected by the Christmas demand, or whether the kitchen was demoralised by

the holiday, I am unable to decide; but I noticed that the decoction was more innocuous than usual, although I had thought its customary strength could not be weakened without a miracle. My breakfast being devised on the plainest vegetarian principles, there was no occasion for grace before meat, so I sipped the tea and munched the bread (eight ounces straight off requires a great deal of mastication) without breathing a word of thanks to the giver of all good things.

After a remarkably short hour's tramp round the exercise ring in a thieves' procession, doing the rogue's march without the music, I returned to my cell, and sitting down on my little three-legged stool, I was soon lost in thought. I wondered what my wife was doing, how she was spending the auspicious day. What a "merry Christmas" for a woman with her husband eating his heart out in gaol! But "that way madness lies," and I had fought down the demon too long to give way then. Springing to my feet, I sped up and down my cell like a caged animal, and after many maledictions on "the accursed creed," I succeeded in stilling the tumult of my emotions. A great calm followed this storm, and resuming my seat and leaning my back against the plank-bed, I took a scornful retrospect of my prosecution and trial. How insignificant looked the Tylers, Giffards, Norths and Harcourts! How noble the friends and the party who had stood by me in the dark hour of defeat! A few short weeks, and I should be free again to join their ranks and strike hard in the thickest of the battle, under the grand old flag of Freethought.

The chapel-bell roused me from phantasy. The other half of the prison disgorged its inmates, and I could hear the sound of their tramping to the sanctuary. While they were engaged there I read a chapter of Gibbon; after which I heard the "miserable sinners" return from the chapel to their cells.

At twelve o'clock came my second instalment of Christmas fare: six ounces of potatoes, eight ounces

of bread and a mutton chop. Being on hospital diet, I had this trinity for my dinner every day for nine months, and words cannot describe the nauseous monotony of the *menu*. The other prisoners had the regular Sunday's diet: bread, potatoes and suet-pudding. After dinner I went for another short hour's tramp in the yard. The officers seemed to relax their usual rigor, and many of the prisoners exchanged greetings. "How did yer like the figgy duff?" "Did the beef stick in yer stomach?" Such were the flowers of conversation that afternoon. From the talk around me, I gathered that under the old management, before the Government took over the prison, all the inmates had a "blow out" on Christmas-day, consisting of beef, vegetables, plum-pudding and a pint of beer. Some of the "old hands" bitterly bewailed the decadence in prison hospitality. Their lamentations were worthy of a Conservative orator at a rural meeting. The present was a poor thing compared with the past, and they sighed for "the tender grace of a day that is dead."

After exercise I went to chapel. The schoolmaster, who was a very pleasant gentleman, had drilled the singing class into a fair state of efficiency, and they sang one or two Christmas hymns in pretty good style; but the effect of their efforts was considerably marred by the rest of the congregation, whose unmusical voices, bad sense of time, and ignorance of the tune, more than once nearly brought the performance to an untimely end. Parson Playford followed with a seasonable sermon, which would have been more heartily relished on a fuller stomach. He told us what a blessed time Christmas was, and how people did well to be joyous on the anniversary of their Savior's birth; after which I presume he returned to the bosom of his family, and celebrated the birth of Christ with liberal doses of turkey, goose, beef, pudding, and communion wine. Before dismissing us with his blessing to our "little rooms," which was his habitual euphemism for

our cells, he said that he could not wish us a happy Christmas in our unhappy condition, but would wish us a peaceful Christmas; and he ventured to promise us that boon, if after leaving chapel, we fell on our knees, and besought pardon for our sins. Most of the prisoners received this advice with a grin, for their cell-floors were black-leaded, and practising genuflexions in their "little-rooms" gave too much knee-cap to their trousers.

At six o'clock I had my third instalment of Christmas fare, consisting of another eight ounces of bread and three quarters of a pint of tea. The last mouthfuls were consumed to the accompaniment of church bells. The neighboring gospel-shops were announcing their evening performance, and the sound penetrated into my cell through the open ventilator. The true believers were wending their way to God's house, and the heretic, who had dared to deride their creed and denounce their hypocrisy, was regaling himself on dry bread and warm water in one of their prison-cells. And the bells rang out against each other from the many steeples with a wild glee as I paced up and down my narrow dungeon. They seemed mad with the intoxication of victory; they mocked me with their bacchanalian frenzy of triumph. But I smiled grimly, for their clamor was no more than the ancient fool's-shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Great Christ has had his day since, but he in turn is dead; dead in man's intellect, dead in man's heart, dead in man's life; a mere phantom, flitting about the aisles of churches where priestly mummers go through the rites of a phantom creed.

I took my Bible and read the story of Christ's birth in Matthew and Luke. What an incongruous jumble of absurdities! A poor fairy tale of the world's childhood, utterly insignificant beside the stupendous wonders which science has revealed to its manhood. From the fanciful little story of the Magi following a star, to Shelley's "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever,"

what an advance! As I retired to sleep upon my plank-bed my mind was full of these reflections. And when the gas was turned out, and I was left alone in darkness and silence, I felt serene and almost happy.

WHO KILLED CHRIST?

WITHOUT committing ourselves to a full acceptance of the Gospel story of Christ's death, with all its monstrous miracles and absurd defiance of Roman and Jewish legal procedure, we propose to take the story as it stands for the purpose of discussing the question at the top of this article.

The ordinary Christian will exclaim that Jesus was murdered by those infernal Jews. Ever since they had the power of persecuting the Jews—that is, ever since the days of Constantine—the Christians have acted on the assumption that the countrymen of Jesus did actually cry out before Pilate, "His blood be on our heads!" and that they and their posterity deserved any amount of robbery and outrage until they unanimously confessed their sin and worshipped him whom they crucified. It made no difference that the contemporaries of Jesus Christ could not transmit their guilt to their offspring. The Christians continued, century after century, to act in the spirit of the sailor in the story. Coming ashore after a long voyage, Jack attended church and heard a pathetic sermon on the Crucifixion. On the following day he looked into the window of a print-shop, and saw a picture of Jesus on the cross. Just then a Jew came and looked into the window; whereupon the sailor, pointing to the

picture, asked the Hebrew gentleman whether he recognised it. "That's Jesus," said the Jew, and the sailor immediately knocked him down. Surprised at this treatment, the Hebrew gentleman inquired the reason. "Why," said the sailor, "didn't you infernal Jews crucify him?" The poor son of Abraham admitted the fact, but explained that it happened nearly two thousand years ago. "No matter," said the sailor, "I only heard of it yesterday."

Now it is perfectly clear, according to the Gospels, that the Jews did *not* kill Jesus. Unless they lynched him they had no power to put him to death. Judæa was then a Roman province, and in every part of the Empire the extreme penalty of the law was only inflicted by the Roman governor. Nevertheless it may be argued that the Jews *really* killed him, although they did not actually shed his blood, as they clamored for his death and terrorised Pontius Pilate into ordering a judicial murder. But suppose we take this view of the case: does it therefore follow that they acted without justification? Was not Jesus, in their judgment, guilty of blasphemy, and was not that a deadly crime under the Mosaic law? "He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord," says Leviticus xxiv. 16, "shall surely be put to death." Were not the Jews, then, carrying out the plain commandment of Jehovah?

Nor was this their only justification. In another part of the Mosaic law (Deut. xiii. 6-10), the Jews were ordered to kill anyone, whether mother, son, daughter, husband, or wife, who should entice them to worship other gods. Now it is expressly maintained by the overwhelming majority of divines that Jesus asserted his own godhead. He is reported as saying, "I and my father are one," and, as St. Paul says, "He thought it no robbery to be equal to God." Were not the Jews, then, bound to kill him if they could?

Let it not be supposed that *we* would have killed him. We are not excusing the Jews as men, but as

observers of the Mosaic law and worshippers of Jehovah. Their God is responsible for the death of Jesus, and if Jesus was a portion of that very deity, he was responsible for his own death. His worshippers had learnt the lesson so well that they killed their own God when he came in disguise.

It is contended by some Christians that Pontius Pilate killed Jesus. According to these arguers, Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and the execution was therefore a murder. But is it not perfectly obvious from the Gospel story that Pilate tried to save Jesus? Did not the obstinate prisoner plead guilty to what was really a charge of sedition? Did he attempt any defence? Did he call any witnesses? Was he not contumacious? And had Pilate any alternative to sentencing him to the legal punishment of his crime?

Other friends of Jesus lay the blame of his death on Judas Iscariot. But the whole story of his "betrayal" of Jesus is a dowright absurdity. How could he *sell* his master when the commodity was common? What sense is there in his being paid to indicate the best-known man in Jerusalem? Even if the story were true, it appears that Jesus knew what Judas was doing, and as he could easily have returned to Galilee, he was accessory to his own fate. It may also be pointed out that Judas only killed Jesus if the tragedy would not have occurred without him; in which case he was the proximate cause of the Crucifixion, and consequently a benefactor to all who are saved by the blood of Christ. Instead of execration, therefore, he deserves praise, and even the statue which Disraeli suggested as his proper reward.

Who killed Christ? Why himself. His brain gave way. He was demented. His conduct at Jerusalem was that of a maniac. His very language showed a loss of balance. Whipping the dove-sellers and money-changers, not out of the Temple, but out of its unsanctified precincts, was lunatic violence. Those mer-

chants were fulfilling a necessary, reputable function; selling doves to women who required them as burnt offerings, and exchanging the current Roman money for the sacred Jewish coins which alone were accepted by the Temple priests. It is easy to call them thieves, but they were not tried, and their evidence is unheard. If they cheated, they must have been remarkably clever, for all their customers were Jews. Besides, there were proper tribunals for the correction of such offences, and no one who was not beside himself would think of going into a market and indiscriminately whipping the traders and dashing down their stalls. Certainly any man who did it now would be arrested, if he were not lynched on the spot, and would either be imprisoned or detained at Her Majesty's pleasure.

Quite in keeping with these displays of temper was the conduct of Jesus before Pilate. A modicum of common sense would have saved him. He was not required to tell a lie or renounce a conviction. All that was necessary to his release was to plead not guilty and defend himself against the charge of sedition. His death, therefore, was rather a suicide than a martyrdom. Unfortunately the jurisprudence of that age was less scientific than the one which now prevails; the finer differences between sanity and insanity were not discriminated; otherwise Jesus would have been remanded for inquiries into his mental condition.

As a man Jesus died because he had not the sense to live. As a God he must have died voluntarily. In either case it is an idle, gratuitous, enervating indulgence in "the luxury of woe" to be always afflicting ourselves with the story of his doom. Great and good men have suffered and died since, and other lessons are needed than any that may be learnt at the foot of the Cross.

DID JESUS ASCEND?

THE story of the Ascension of Jesus Christ is as absurd as the story of his Resurrection. Both, in fact, are the products of an age prone to believe in the wonderful. So prevalent was the popular belief in the supernatural character of great men, that the comparatively cultivated Romans accepted a monstrous fable about Julius Cæsar. "The enthusiasm of the multitude," says Mr. Froude, "refused to believe that he was dead. He was supposed to have ascended into heaven, not in adulatory metaphor, but in literal and prosaic fact."

Similarly the enthusiasm of the first followers of Jesus, and especially of hysterical ladies like Mary Magdalene, refused to believe that *he* was dead. The fable of his resurrection was gradually developed, and his ascension was devised to round off the story. Whoever will read St. Paul's epistles first, and the Gospels and the Acts afterwards, will see how the Christ myth grew from vagueness to precision under the shaping imagination of the Church of the first century after the age of the Apostles.

It is a significant fact that the appearances of Jesus after his Resurrection were all made to the faithful, and his ascension took place before them, without a single impartial person being allowed to witness an event of which it was of the utmost importance for the world to have positive assurance.

When we turn to the Gospels and the Acts, five documents whose authorship is absolutely unknown, we find the most contradictory accounts of what happened after the Resurrection. It may safely be affirmed that five such witnesses would damn any case in a legal court where the laws of evidence are respected.

These witnesses cannot even agree as to whether the risen Jesus was a man or a ghost. Now he comes through a closed door, and anon he eats broiled fish and honeycomb; now he vanishes, after walking and talking with his disciples, and anon he allows the sceptical Thomas to examine the wounds of his crucifixion as a proof that he was not a spirit, but solid flesh and blood.

According to Matthew's account, Jesus first appeared to the women—as is very probable! Mark says his first appearance was to Mary Magdalene alone; Luke says it was two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

His subsequent appearances are recorded with the same harmony. While Matthew makes him appear but once, Mark makes him appear three times—to the women, to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and to the eleven apostles. Luke makes him appear but twice, and John four times—to Mary Magdalene alone, to the disciples in a room without Thomas, to the same again with Thomas, and to the same once more at Tiberias. John is the only one who tells the pretty story about Thomas, and John of course is the only one who mentions the spear-thrust in Christ's side at the crucifixion, because he wanted a hole for Thomas to put his hand into, and the other evangelists had no need of such a provision.

Matthew and Mark relate that the disciples were told by an angel to go to Galilee, while Luke keeps them in the Holy City, and Acts declares that Jesus expressly "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem."

The ascension itself, which involved the last appearance of Jesus, as well as his disappearance, is not related by Matthew, nor is it related by John. Now Matthew and John are *supposed* to have been apostles. If the ascension happened they must have witnessed it; but both of them are silent, and the story of the ascension comes from three writers who were *not present.*

Nor do these three writers agree with each other. Luke informs us that Jesus ascended from Bethany, a short distance from Jerusalem, on the very day of the Resurrection, or at the latest the next morning; while Mark, without any precision as to time, distinctly affirms that Jesus ascended from Galilee, which was at least sixty miles from Jerusalem. Now the ascension could not have occurred at two different places, and, in the absence of corroborative testimony, Mark and Luke destroy each other as witnesses.

The author of Acts agrees with Mark as to the place, but differs both from Mark and Luke as to the time. He declares that Jesus spent forty days (off and on) with his disciples before levitating. This constitutes another difficulty. Mark, Luke, and the author of Acts must all leave the court in disgrace, for it is too late for them to patch up a more harmonious story.

According to the detailed account in Acts, Jesus ascended in the presence of his apostles, including Matthew and John, who appear to have mistrusted their eyesight. After making a speech he was "taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." He was in a cloud, and they were in a cloud, and the millions who believe them are in a cloud.

The time of the year is seasonable for an examination of the story of the Ascension. Would that the opportunity were taken by Christians, who believe what they have been taught with scarcely a moment's investigation, and read the Bible as lazily as they smoke their pipes. We do not ask them to take our word for anything. Let them examine for themselves. If they will do this, we have no fear as to the result. A belief in the New Testament story of the supernatural Christ is impossible to any man who candidly sifts and honestly weighs the evidence.

If Christians would pursue their investigations still further they would soon satisfy themselves that the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ

are largely, if not entirely, mythical. Now, for instance, when they are preparing to celebrate the ascension of Christ, they are welcoming the ascension of the Sun. The great luminary is (apparently) rising higher and higher in the heaven, shedding his warmer beams on the earth, and gladdening the hearts of man. And there is more connection between the Son and the Sun than ordinary Christians imagine.

THE RISING SON.

You are requested to read the above title carefully. Notice the spelling of the last word. It is *son*, not *sun*. The difference to the eye is only in one letter. The substantial difference is very great. Yet in the end the distinction between the Son and the Sun vanishes. Orignially they were one and the same thing, and they will be so again when Christianity is properly understood.

Supposing that Jesus of Nazareth ever lived, it is impossible to know, with any approach to accuracy, what he really was. With the exception of four epistles by Saint Paul—in which we find a highly mystical Christ, and not a portrait or even a sketch of an actual man—we have no materials for a biography of Jesus written within a hundred years of his death. Undoubtedly *some* documents existed before the Canonical and Apocryphal Gospels, but they were lost through neglect or suppression, and what we have is simply the concoction of older materials by an unscrupulous Church.

During the interval between the real or supposed death of Jesus and the date of the gospels, there was plenty of time for the accumulation of any quantity of mythology. The east was full of such material, only waiting, after the destruction of the old national religions under the sway of Rome, to be woven into the texture of a non-national system as wide as the limits of the Empire.

Protestants are able to recognise a vast deal of Paganism in the teaching and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. On that side they keep an open eye. On the other side their eye is shut. If they opened it they would see plenty of Paganism in the gospels.

The only fixed date in the career of Jesus is his birthday. This is known by every scholar to be fictitious. The primitive Church was ignorant of the day on which Jesus was born. But what was unknown to the apostles, one of whom is said to have been his very brother, was opportunely discovered by the Church three hundred years afterwards. For some time the nativity of Jesus had been celebrated on all sorts of days, but the Church brought about uniformity by establishing the twenty-fifth of December. This was the Pagan festival of the nativity of the Sun. The Church simply appropriated it, in order to bring over the Pagan population by a change of doctrine without a change of rites and customs.

It may be objected that the primitive Church did not inquire as to the birthday of Jesus until it was too late to ascertain it. But this objection cannot possibly apply to the resurrection, the date of which is involved in equal uncertainty, although one would expect it to be precisely known and regularly commemorated. For many ages the celebration was irregular. Different Sundays were kept, and sometimes other days, in various weeks of March and April. Finally, after fierce disputes and excommunications, the present system was imposed upon the whole Catholic world.

Easter is, in fact, decided astronomically, by a process in which sun-worship and moon-worship are both conciliated. The starting point is the vernal equinox, which was the time of a common Pagan festival. The very name of Easter is of heathen origin. All its customs are bequeathed to us from far-off Pagan ancestors. Easter eggs, symbolising the life of the universe, have been traced back to the Romans, Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians.

When the Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ they are imitating the ancient "heathen," who at the same time of the year commemorated the resurrection of the Sun, and his manifest triumph over the powers of darkness. And when the moderns prepare to celebrate the ascension of Christ, they are really welcoming the ascension of the Sun. The great luminary—father of light and lord of life—is then (apparently) rising higher and higher in heaven, shedding his warmer beams on the earth, and gladdening the hearts of men.

Churches and altars are decked with vegetation, which is another relic of nature-worship. Life is once more bursting forth under the kindling rays of the sun. Hope springs afresh in the heart of man. His fancy sees the pastures covered with flocks and herds, the corn waving in the breeze, and the grapes plumping in the golden sunshine, big with the blood of earth and the fire of heaven.

According to the Apostles' Creed, Jesus descended into hell between his death and resurrection. That is also a relic of sun-worship. During the dark, cold winter the sun descended into the underworld, which is the real meaning of Hades. Misunderstanding this circumstance, or deliberately perverting it, the early Church fabricated the monstrous fable that Jesus "preached unto the spirits in prison," as we read in the first epistle of Peter. One of the apocryphal gospels gives a lively account of how he harried the realm of Old Harry, emptying the place wholesale,

and robbing the poor Devil of all his illustrious subjects, from Adam to John the Baptist.

A volume might be filled with illustrations of the mythology of the Resurrection. Our present space is limited, and we must let the above suffice. Anyone who reads the gospel story of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, with a careful eye and a critical mind, will see that it is not historical. Such witnesses, so loose in statement and so contradictory of each other, would collapse in a few minutes in any court of law. They do not write as spectators, and they were not spectators. What they give us is the legendary and mythical story that had taken possession of the Christian mind long after all the contemporaries of Jesus were dead.

Our belief, in conclusion, is that the Rising Sun will outlast the Rising Son. The latter is gradually, but very surely, perishing. Even professed Christians are giving up the miraculous elements of the gospels. But who would give up the Sun, which has warmed, lighted, and fertilised the earth for millions of years, and will do so for millions of years after the death of Christianity?

ST. PAUL'S VERACITY.

A VERY pretty storm has been raised (and settled) by the *Independent* and *Nonconformist*. It raged around the Apostle Paul and Mr. Herbert Spencer, who both come out of it apparently not a penny the worse. Mr. Spencer has a chapter on Veracity in his recently published *Principles of Ethics*, wherein he cites Paul as a violator of this virtue, and remarks that "appa-

rently piquing himself on his craft and guile," he "elsewhere defends his acts by contending that 'the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory.'" This roused the ire of the *Independent*, and Mr. Spencer was informed that his extraordinary aspersion on the Apostle's character was wholly without justification. Whereupon the great Evolutionist replied that two days before receiving the *Independent* he had "sent to the printer the copy of a cancel to be substituted for the page in which there occurs the error you point out." Mr. Spencer goes on to say that he had trusted to assistants, and been misled on this particular point as on a few others.

"The inductions contained in the *Principles of Sociology* and in Part II. of the *Principles of Ethics* are based mainly, though not wholly, upon the classified materials contained in *The Descriptive Sociology*, compiled between 1867 and 1881 by three University men I engaged for the purpose. When using this compilation of facts concerning sixty-eight different societies I have habitually trusted to the compilers. For even had I been in good health, it would have been impossible for me to verify all their extracts from multitudinous books. In some cases, where the work was at hand, I have referred for verification; and have usually done so in the case of extracts from the Bible; now and then, as I remember, rejecting the extracts given to me as being not justified by the context. But in the case in point it seems that I had not been sufficiently careful. It is only after reading the preceding chapter that it becomes clear that the passage I quoted must be taken as part of an argument with an imaginary interlocutor, rather than as expressive of St. Paul's own sentiment. It must, I think, be admitted that the presentation of the thought is a good deal complicated, and, in the absence of the light thrown upon it by the preceding chapter, is liable to be misunderstood. I regret that I misunderstood it."

This explanation and apology are, of course, most satisfactory. Saint Paul is cleared by Mr. Spencer's certificate, and the *Independent* remarks that this is "a noble codicil to Mr. Spencer's chapter on Veracity." Nay, it professes high "admiration" for him as the "greatest living philosopher of the English-speaking race." Thus the "Comedy of Errors" is followed by

"All's Well that Ends Well," and the curtain falls on compliments and embraces.

It really seems a shame to disturb this pleasant harmony, but we feel compelled to say something to the *Independent* and to Mr. Herbert Spencer about the Apostle Paul.

In the first place we must observe that Mr. Spencer's "erroneous" statement about the great apostle, while it may be an *aspersion*, is certainly not *extraordinary*. It has repeatedly been made by the apostle's adverse critics, and even by some of his admirers. Without citing a long list of them, we will give two—both English, and both judicial. Jeremy Bentham, the great reformer of our jurisprudence, wrote a work entitled *Not Paul, but Jesus*, in which he contends through four hundred pages that Paul was mercenary, ambitious, and an unscrupulous liar. To cull a single passage from Bentham's book is like picking one raisin from a rich plum-pudding. Every sentence is an indictment. And surely after Bentham's trenchant performance it is idle for an English journal to pretend that there is anything "extraordinary" in Mr. Spencer's "erroneous" accusation. The other judicial writer, also belonging to the English race, is Sir Richard David Hanson, who was for some time Chief Justice of South Australia. In his able work on *The Apostle Paul* there is an admirable summing-up of the hero's character. After admitting Paul's ability, persistence, courage, and other virtues, he remarks—"But these are accompanied by what in an uninspired man would be called pride, jealousy, disdain, invective, sophistry, time-serving and intolerance." This is pretty strong; and "sophistry" and "time-serving" are only euphemisms for *lying* in preaching and practice.

So much for the *Independent*, and now for Mr. Spencer. It must be observed that one part of his "erroneous" statement *cannot* be repudiated. The apostle distinctly says, "being crafty, I caught you with guile" (2 Cor. xii. 16), so that "piquing himself

on his craft and guile" must stand while this text remains in the Epistle. Mr. Spencer allows that, in the third of Romans, the "presentation of the thought is a good deal complicated," and "liable to be misunderstood"; but, if read in the light of the preceding chapter, the passage about lying to the glory of God "must be taken as part of an argument with an imaginary interlocutor." Perhaps so; but *which* is speaking in the seventh verse? Paul or his opponent? Mr. Spencer does not say. Yet this is the real point. To us it seems that *Paul* is speaking. Of course it may be urged that he is speaking ironically. But this is not Mr. Spencer's contention. It is not clear what he *does* mean; in fact, he seems to have caught a little of Paul's confusion.

We have no objection to reading the seventh verse of the third of Romans in the light of the preceding chapter. But should it not also be read in the light of Christian history? Have honest openness and strict veracity been *ever* regarded as essential virtues in the propagation of the gospel? And why is it likely that Paul, of all men, escaped the contagion of fraud, which has always disgraced the Christian Church? The ordinary Protestant imagines, or pretends, that the Catholic Church has been the great impostor; but this is nonsense to the student of early Christianity. Mosheim remarks that the "pernicious maxim" that "those who make it their business to deceive with a view of promoting the cause of truth were deserving rather of commendation than of censure," was "*very early* recognised by the Christians." Bishop Ellicott similarly observes that "history forces upon us the recognition of pious fraud as a principle which was by no means inoperative in the *earliest ages* of Christianity." Middleton likewise reflects that the bold defiance of honesty and truth displayed by the Fathers of the fourth century "could not have been acquired, or become general at once, but must have been carried gradually to that height, by custom and the example of

former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and superstition of the multitude would bear." So far, indeed, were the "*earlier ages*" from being remarkable for integrity, that Middleton says there never was "any period of time" in which fraud and forgery more abounded. The learned Casaubon also complains that it was in "the *earliest times* of the Church" that it was "considered a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truth the help of invention, in order that the new doctrine might be more readily allowed by the wise among the Gentiles." Mosheim even finds that the period of fraud began "not long after Christ's ascension." And it continued, without a blush of shame on Christian cheeks; not growing worse, for that was impossible; until Eusebius, in the fourth century, remarked as a matter of course that he had written what redounded to the glory, and suppressed whatever tended to the disgrace of religion.

Now if fraud was practised as a pious principle in the very earliest ages of Christianity; if it continued for as many centuries as it could pass with impunity; if it was so systematic and prolonged, and carried to such a height, that Herder declared "Christian veracity" fit to rank with "Punic Faith"; what right has anyone —even a Christian editor—to place Paul above suspicion, or to find a "monstrous" blunder in his being accused of lying, especially when the historic practice of his co-religionists seems to many persons to be more than half countenanced by his own language?

We are not concerned to *press* the charge of lying against St. Paul. There have been so many liars in the Christian Church that one more or less makes very little difference. On the other hand, we cannot accept Mr. Spencer's certificate without reservation. He admits that Paul's language is obscure; and perhaps a little obscurity is to be expected when a man is replying to an accusation which he is not wholly able to rebut.

NO FAITH WITH HERETICS.

DURING the Crusades, when the Christians were wantonly fighting against their superiors in civilisation and humanity, the doctrine was promulgated and obeyed that no faith should be kept with infidels, and this was subsequently put in force against heretics. Thousands of Mohammedan prisoners were butchered in cold blood, although their safety had been confirmed by an oath; and this infamous practice was afterwards pursued with respect to the "heretical" sects when the Papal troops desolated some of tht fairest parts of Europe. Not only was there no salvation outside the Church, but even the ordinary laws of human society were held to be abrogated. This wickedness, perhaps, reached its culmination in the Spanish conquest of America. Few Christians were civilised enough to condemn these purjured banditti, but Montaigne in France, and Raleigh in England, were glorious exceptions, and both of them were under a just suspicion of heterodoxy.

Protestants as well as Catholics were infected with this infamous bigotry. Luther himself was not free from taint, and Calvin's treachery against Servetus is an eternal blot on his character.

"No faith with heretics" took a new form when the downright violation of an oath became too dissonant to the spirit of an improved civilisation. It found expression in robbing the heretic of political and social rights, and above all in treating him as outside the pale of honor. Slandering him was no libel. Every bigot claimed the right to say anything against his character, for the purpose of bringing his opinions into hatred and contempt. All the dictates of charity were cast aside; his good actions were misrepresented, and his failings maliciously exaggerated. If Voltaire spent

thousands in charity, he did it for notoriety; if he wrote odes to beautiful or accomplished ladies, he was a wretched debauchee. If Thomas Paine made sacrifices for liberty, he did it because he had a private grudge against authority; if he befriended the wife and family of a distressed Republican, he only sought to gratify his lust; if he spent a convivial hour with a friend, he was an inveterate drunkard; and if he contracted a malignant abscess by lying for months in a damp, unwholesome dungeon, his sufferings were the nemesis of a wicked, profligate life.

An English precursor of Voltaire and Paine wrote *A Discourse on Freethinking.* His name was Anthony Collins, and in a certain sense he was the father of English Freethought. He was a man of exemplary life and manners, yet the saintly Bishop Berkeley said he "deserved to be denied the common benefit of air and water." One of Collins's antagonists was the famous Dr. Bentley; and although Collins was a man of fortune, the ridiculous calumny was started that he sought and obtained Bentley's aasistance in adversity. The author of this calumny was Richard Cumberland, a grandson of Bentley, and in other respects an estimable man. His mistake was pointed out by Isaac D'Israeli, who told him the person he meant was *Arthur* Collins, the historical compiler. But Cumberland perpetuated the calumny, remarking that "it should stand, because it could do no harm to any but to Anthony Collins, whom he considered little short of an Atheist."

Another story about Collins, which has frequently done duty in Christian publications, is that a visitor found him reading the New Testament, and that he remarked, "I have but one book, but that is the best." Fortunately I am able to give the origin of this story. It is told of *William* Collins, the poet, by Dr. Johnson, and may be found in the second volume (p. 239) of that writer's "Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces," published by Davies in Johnson's lifetime. It was not Anthony Collins, therefore; but what does that

matter? It was a gentleman named *Collins;* his other name is indifferent. Besides, the story is so much more affecting when told of *Anthony.*

Look at the lying stories of infidel death-beds; glance at the scurrilities of an outcast minister which are gratuitously circulated by the enemies of Colonel Ingersoll; observe on how many platforms Mr. Bradlaugh has pulled out his watch and given the Almighty five minutes to strike him dead; listen to the grotesque libels on every leading Freethinker which are solemnly circulated by Christian malice; and you will behold the last fruit of a very old tree, which is slowly but surely perishing. It once bore scaffolds, stakes, prisons and torture rooms; it now bears but libels and insinuations.

THE LOGIC OF PERSECUTION.

NEITHER the cruelty of tyrants, nor the ambition of conquerors, has wrought so much mischief and suffering as the principle of persecution. The crimes of a Nero, the ravages of an Attila, afflict the world for a season, and then cease and are forgotten, or only linger in the memory of history. But persecution operates incessantly like a natural force. With the universality of light, it radiates in every direction. The palace is not too proud for its entrance, nor is the cottage too humble. It affects every relationship of life. Its action is exhibited in public through imprisonment, torture, and bloodshed, and in private through the tears of misery and the groans of despair.

But worse remains. Bodies starve and hearts break, but at last there comes "the poppied sleep, the end of all." Grief is buried in the grave, Nature covers it with a mantle of grass and flowers, and the feet of joy trip merrily over the paths once trodden by heavy-footed care. Yet the more subtle effects of persecution remain with the living. *They* are not screwed down in the coffin and buried with the dead. They become part of the pestilential atmosphere of cowardice and hypocrisy which saps the intellectual manhood of society, so that bright-eyed inquiry sinks into blear-eyed faith, and the rich vitality of active honest thought falls into the decrepitude of timid and slothful acquiescence.

What is this principle of persecution, and how is it generated and developed in the human mind? Now that it is falling into discredit, there is a tendency on the part of Christian apologists to ascribe it to our natural hatred of contradiction. Men argue and quarrel, and if intellectual differences excite hostility in an age like this, how easy it was for them to excite the bitterest animosity in more ignorant and barbarous ages! Such is the plea now frequently advanced. No doubt it wears a certain plausibility, but a little investigation will show its fallacy. Men and women are so various in their minds, characters, circumstances, and interests, that if left to themselves they inevitably form a multiplicity of ever-shifting parties, sects, fashions and opinions; and while each might resent the impertinence of disagreement from its own standard, the very multiformity of the whole mass must preserve a general balance of fair play, since every single sect with an itch for persecuting would be confronted by an overwhelming majority of dissidents. It is obvious, therefore, that persecution can only be indulged in when some particular form of opinion is in the ascendant: and if this form is artificially developed; if it is the result, not of knowledge and reflection, but of custom and training; if, in short, it is rather a

superstition than a belief; you have a condition of things highly favorable to the forcible suppression of heresy. Now, throughout history, there is one great form of opinion which *has been* artificially developed, which has been accepted through faith and not through study, which has always been concerned with alleged occurrences in the remote past or the inaccessible future, and which has also been systematically maintained in its "pristine purity" by an army of teachers who have pledged themselves to inculcate the ancient faith without any admixture of their own intelligence.

That form of opinion is Religion. Accordingly we should expect to find its career always attended with persecution, and the expectation is amply justified by a cursory glance at the history of every faith. There is, indeed, one great exception; but, to use a popular though inaccurate phrase, it is an exception which proves the rule. Buddhism has never persecuted. But Buddhism is rather a philosophy than a religion; or, if a religion, it is not a theology, and that is the sense attached to *religion* in this article.

All such religions have persecuted, do persecute, and will persecute while they exist. Let it not be supposed, however, that they punish heretics on the open ground that the majority must be right and the minority must be wrong, or that some people have a right to think while others have only the right to acquiesce. No, that is too shameless an avowal; nor would it, indeed, be the real truth. There is a principle in religions which has always been the sanction of persecution, and if it be true, persecution is more than right, it is a duty. That principle is Salvation by Faith.

If a certain belief is necessary to salvation, if to reject it is to merit damnation, and to undermine it is to imperil the eternal welfare of others, there is only one course open to its adherents; they must treat the heretic as they would treat a viper. He is a poisonous creature to be swiftly extinguished.

But not *too* swiftly, for he has a soul that may still be saved. Accordingly he is sequestered to prevent further harm, an effort is made to convert him, then he is punished, and the rest is left with God. That his conversion is attempted by torture, either physical or mental, is not an absurdity; it is consonant to the doctrine of salvation by faith. For if God punishes or rewards us according to our possession or lack of faith, it follows that faith is within the power of will. Accordingly the heretic, to use Dr. Martineau's expression, is reminded not of arguments but of motives, not of evidence but of fear, not of proofs but of perils, not of reasons but of ruin. When we recognise that the understanding acts independently of volition, and that the threat of punishment, while it may produce silence or hypocrisy, *cannot* alter belief, this method of procedure strikes us as a monstrous imbecility; but, given a belief in the doctrine of salvation by faith, it must necessarily appear both logical and just. If the heretic *will* not believe, he is clearly wicked, for he rejects the truth and insults God. He has deliberately chosen the path to hell, and does it matter whether he travel slowly or swiftly to his destination? But does it *not* matter whether he go alone or drag down others with him to perdition? Such was the logic of the Inquisitors, and although their cruelties must be detested their consistency must be allowed.

Catholics have an infallible Church, and the Protestants an infallible Bible. Yet as the teaching of the Bible becomes a question of interpretation, the infallibility of each Church resolves itself into the infallibility of its priesthood. Each asserts that *some* belief is necessary to salvation. Religious liberty, therefore, has never entered into the imagination of either. The Protestants who revolted against the Papacy openly avowed the principle of persecution. Luther, Beza, Calvin, and Melancthon, were probably more intolerant than any Pope of their age; and if the Protestant persecutions were not, on the whole, so

sanguinary as those of the Roman Catholic Church, it was simply due to the fact that Catholicism passed through a dark and ferocious period of history, while Protestantism emerged in an age of greater light and humanity. Persecution cannot always be bloody, but it always inflicts on heretics as much suffering as the sentiment of the community will tolerate.

The doctrine of salvation by faith has been more mischievous than all other delusions of theology combined. How true are the words of Pascal: "Jamais on ne fait le mal si pleinement et si gaiement que quand on le fait par un faux principe de conscience." Fortunately a nobler day is breaking. The light of truth succeeds the darkness of error. Right belief is infinitely important, but it cannot be forced. Belief is independent of will. But character is not, and therefore the philosopher approves or condemns actions instead of censuring beliefs. Theology, however, consistently clings to its old habits. "Infidels" must not be argued with but threatened, not convinced but libelled; and when these weapons are futile there ensues the persecution of silence. That serves for a time, but only for a time; it may obstruct, but it cannot prevent, the spread of unbelief. It is like a veil against the light. It may obscure the dawn to the dull-eyed and the uninquisitive, but presently the blindest sluggards in the penfolds of faith will see that the sun has risen.

LUTHER AND THE DEVIL.

"LUTHER," says Heine, "was not only the greatest, but also the most thoroughly German, hero of our history." Carlyle says that "no more valiant man, no

mortal heart to be called *braver*, ever lived in that Teutonic kindred, whose character is valor." Michelet calls him "the Arminius of modern Germany." Twenty tributes to Luther's greatness might be added, all more or less memorable; but these, from three very diverse men, will suffice for our present purpose. Martin Luther *was* a great man. Whoever questions it must appeal to new definitions.

A great difference lay between the cold, saturnine Pope of Geneva and the frank, exuberant hero of the German Reformation. Their doctrines were similar; there was a likeness between their mistakes; but what a diversity in their natures! Calvin was the perfect type of the theological pedant—vain, meagre, and arid; while Luther had in him, as Heine remarks, "something aboriginal"; and the world has, after all, profited by "the God-like brutality of Brother Martin."

The nature of this great man was suited to his task. It required no great intellectual power to see through the tricks of Papal priestcraft, which had, indeed, been the jest of the educated and thoughtful for generations. But it required gigantic courage to become the spokesman of discontent, to attack an imposture which was supported by universal popular credulity, by a well-nigh omnipotent Church, and by the keen-edged, merciless swords of kings and emperors. Still more, it required an indisputable elevation of nature to attack the imposture where, as in the sale of indulgences, it threatened the very essence of personal and social morality. Hundreds of persons may be hatching a new truth in unknown concert, but when a battle for humanity has to be fought, someone must begin, and begin decisively. Luther stepped out as protagonist in the great struggle of his time; and Freethought is not so barren in great names that it need envy Brother Martin his righteous applause. Indeed, it seems to me that Freethinkers are in a position to esteem Luther more justly than Christians. Seeing what was his task, and how it demanded a stormy, impetuous nature,

we can thank Luther for accomplishing it, while recognising his great defects, his faults of temper and the narrowness of his views; defects, I would add, which it were unnecessary to dwell on if Protestants did not magnify them into virtues, or if they did not illustrate the inherent vices of Christianity itself.

Strong for his life-task, Luther was weak in other respects. Like Dr. Johnson, there were strange depths in his character, but none in his intellect. He emitted many flashes of genius in writing and talking, but they all came from the heart, and chiefly from the domestic affections. He broke away from the Papacy, but he only abandoned Catholicism so far as it conflicted with the most obvious morality. He retained all its capital superstitions. Mr. Froude puts the case very mildly when he says that "Erasmus knew many things which it would have been well for Luther to have known." Erasmus would not have called Copernicus "an old fool," or have answered him by appealing to Joshua. Erasmus would not have seen a special providence in the most trifling accidents. Erasmus would not have allowed devils to worry him. Above all, Erasmus would not have pursued those who were heretics to *his* doctrine with all the animosity of a Papal bigot. Such differences induced Mr. Matthew Arnold to call Luther a Philistine of genius; just as they led Goethe to say that Luther threw back the intellectual progress of mankind for centuries. Another poet, Shelley, seems to me to have hit the precise truth in his "Ode to Liberty":

> Luther caught thy wakening glance:
> Like lightning from his leaden lance
> Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
> In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay.

Shelley's epithet is perfect. Luther's lance was big and potent. It wrought terrible havoc among the enemy. But it was *leaden*. It overthrew, but it did not transfix.

This is not the place to relate how Luther played the Pope in his own way; how he persecuted the Zwinglians because they went farther than himself on the subject of the real presence; how he barked at the Swiss reformers, how he pursued Andreas Bodenstein for a difference on infant baptism; how he treated Münzer and the Anabaptists; how he hounded on the nobles to suppress the peasant revolt and "stab, kill, and strangle them without mercy"; or how he was for handing over to the executioner all who denied a single article which rested on the Scripture or the authority of the universal teaching of the Church. My purpose is to show Luther's attitude towards the Devil, witches, apparitions, and all the rest of that ghostly tribe; and in doing so I have no wish to indulge in "the most small sneer" which Carlyle reprobates; although I do think it a great pity that such a man as Luther should have been a slave to superstitions which Erasmus would have met with a wholesome jest.

Neither Jews nor witches fared any the better for the Reformation, until it had far outgrown the intention of its founders. Brother Martin hated the Jews, thought many of them sorcerers, and praised the Duke of Saxony for killing a Jew in testing a talisman. As for witches, he said, "I would have no compassion on them—I would burn them all." Poor creatures! Yet Luther was naturally compassionate. It was the fatal superstition which steeled his heart. Still there are dainty sceptics who tell us not to attack superstition. I point them to Martin Luther burning witches.

Brother Martin lived in God's presence, but they were generally three, for the Devil was seldom absent. His Satanic Majesty plagued the poor Reformer's life till he wished himself safe in heaven. Sometimes the fiend suggested impious doubts, and at other times suicide. He attributed his chronic vertigo to the Devil, because the physic he took did him no good. So familiar did the Devil become that Luther, hearing him walk overhead at night, would say "Oh, is it you?"

and go to sleep again. Once, when he was marrying an aristocratic couple, the wedding ring slipped out of his fingers at a critical moment. He was frightened, but, recovering himself, he exclaimed, "Listen, Devil, it is not your business, you are wasting your time." The famous scene in which Luther threw an inkstand at the Devil is legendary, though Coleridge, Carlyle and others have made it the theme of their eloquence; and the ink-stain still shown on the wall at Wartburg is like the stain of Rizzio's blood in Holyrood Palace.

Luther's own visions were largely due to dyspepsia and an active imagination. He said that the Devil troubled him less at night when he took a good "night-cap," which made him sleep soundly. He found that the Devil could not stand music, being a sad and sombre personage; just as, long before, music was found a sovereign recipe for the melancholia of King Saul. But the surest specific was railing and derision. When Luther called him names, or laughed at him, the Devil vanished in a huff. Brother Martin was plain-spoken at the best of times, but on these occasions he was too downright for quotation. Michelet gives a choice sample; but though the French language allows more licence than ours, he is obliged to give but the first letter of one of Luther's vigorous substantives. Brother Martin displayed a sly humor in one of his stories about Satan. A possessed person was taken into a monastery, and the devil in him said to the monks, "O my people, what have I done?"—*Populo meus, quid feci tibi?*

According to Luther, fair and foul winds were caused by good and evil spirits. He spoke of a terrible lake in Switzerland, haunted by the Devil, and said there was a similar one in his own country. If a stone was thrown into it, a frightful storm shook the whole locality. The Devil made people idiots, cripples, blind, deaf and dumb; and Luther declared that the doctors who treated such infirmities as natural had a great deal to learn in demonology. One or two of his stories of possession are extremely gruesome. With his own lusty

love of life, Luther could not understand suicide, so he attributed that also to the Devil. Satan made the suicides think they were doing something else; even praying, and thus he killed them. Brother Martin, indeed, sometimes feared the Devil would twist his neck or press his skull into his brains. Nor did he shrink from the darkest developments of this superstition. He held that the Devil could assume the form of a man or a woman, cohabit with human beings of the opposite sex, and become a father or a mother. "Eight years ago," said Luther, "I saw and touched myself at Dessau a child who had no parents, and was born of the Devil. He was twelve years old, and shaped like an ordinary child. He did nothing but eat, and ate as much as three peasants or threshers. When he was touched he cried out like one possessed; if any unfortunate accident happened in the house, he rejoiced and laughed; if, on the contrary, all went well, he wept continually. I said to the princes of Anhalt, with whom I then was: If I commanded here I would have that child thrown into the Moldau, at the risk of being its murderer. But the Elector of Saxony and the princes were not of my opinion."

Here is a case in which the Doctor of Divinity, though naturally a kind man, is quite ready to take human life at the behest of a devilish superstition, while the less fanatical laymen shrink from such inhumanity. The only devil in this story is the devil of fearful ignorance and misbelief in Brother Martin. He it was who needed the exorcist, although the truth would have greatly surprised him. Carlyle may use his snarling muscles at the "apothecary's apprentice" who is able to give a scientific explanation of Luther's visions; but, after all, the unfortunate persons whom Luther would have murdered by mistake might be pardoned for preferring the apothecary's apprentice to the Protestant Pope. The fact is, the doctrine of devils, of demoniacal possession, of incubi and succubi, and of sorcery and witchcraft, was not fostered by laymen so

much as by the clergy. Lecky remarks that "almost all the great works written in favor of the executions were written by ecclesiastics," and Tylor asserts that "the guilt of thus bringing down Europe intellectually and morally to the level of negro Africa" lies mainly upon the Church, Protestant being as bad as Catholic, for they vied in outraging and killing those who were doomed, by the ghastliest of superstitions, to be "for life and death of all creatures the most wretched." Eternal honor to Luther for the heroism which sent him to Worms, and made him exclaim to his dissuaders: "I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses." But eternal hatred and contempt for the Creed which degraded heroes into Jack the Rippers. I say *the Creed;* for Christianity cannot be exculpated. Witchcraft, possession, and sexual intercourse between human and superhuman beings, are distinctly taught in the Bible; and if there were no other indictment of Christianity, the awful massacre and torture of millions of helpless women and children would suffice to damn it everlastingly.

BIBLE ENGLISH.

TURNING over the pages of Coleridge's "Table Talk" recently, my attention was arrested by several passages I had marked, many years ago, in that suggestive book. Two or three of these, referring to the *style* of the Bible, resuscitated some reflections I made on the first reading, and which I now venture to express: with all deference, let me add, to Coleridge's ethereal genius and magical mastery of words.

"Intense study of the Bible," he says, "will keep any writer from being *vulgar*, in point of style." Granted; and the sacred scriptures of any people and any creed would have the some influence. Vulgarity, unless it is bestial, is monkeyish. Obviously this is a characteristic alien to religion, which is based on the sense of wonder, and deals chiefly with the sublime. While the mind is absorbed by the unseen, imagination is called into play; and imagination is the antithesis of vulgarity. The unknown is also the terrible, and when the mind is alarmed there is no room for the *puerilities* of egotism. Any exaltation of feeling serves the same purpose. The most vulgar woman, in terror at a danger to her child, is lifted into the sphere of tragedy, and becomes a subject for art; nor could the lowest wretch exhibit vulgarity when committing a murder under the influence of passion. Vulgarity, in short, is self-consciousness, or at least only compatible with it; and displays itself in self-assertion at the expense of others, or in disregard or in defiance of their feelings. Now Monotheism, such as the Bible in its sublimest parts is pregnant with, naturally banishes this disposition, just in proportion as it is real. It may tolerate, and even cherish, many other evils, but not that; for vulgarity, as I understand it, is absolutely inconsistent with awe. How then do I account for the vulgarities of the Salvation Army? Simply by the fact that these people have *no* awe; they show the absurdities of religion without its sentiments. They are *townspeople*, used to music-halls, public-houses, street-fights, and frivolous crowds. Their antics would be impish to religionists whose awe was nurtured by hills and forests, the rising and setting sun, and the majesty of night.

Not only do we find the same austere simplicity in the Vedas, the Kurăn, and other sacred scriptures; we find it in most of the old world literature. The characteristic of modern writings is subtlety and dexterity; that of the ancient, massiveness and directness; and

the same difference holds good in a comparison of the various stages of our literature. The simplicity of the Elizabethan lyrics, to say nothing of Chaucer, is only to be emulated in later ages, whose life is so much more complex, by a recluse visionary like Blake. Even when Shelley approaches it, in such songs as that of Beatrice in the last act of the "The Cenci," we feel that stream of music is crossed and shaken by subtle under-currents.

What Coleridge claims for the Bible may be claimed for all imaginative and passionate literature. Æschylus, Lucretius, Dante, Milton; how does the Bible excel these in that respect? When we come to Shakespeare we find a sublimity which transcends that of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Job, with a pathos, a humor, and a wit, such as no Hebrew writer ever imagined. And Shakespeare's superb style triumphs easily in all these fields. Coleridge recommends the Bible as an antidote to vulgarity. I would recommend Milton as much, Dante more, and Shakespeare beyond all.

"Our version of the Bible," Coleridge elsewhere says, "has preserved a purity of meaning to many terms of natural objects. Without this holdfast, our vitiated imaginations would refine away language to mere abstractions." This is merely saying that our Bible, designed for common people centuries ago, is a monument of Saxon English. Clearly that is an accident of our translation, and not an essence of the Bible itself. As much may be said for all our ancient standards.

Coleridge admits that our New Testament is less elegant and correct than the Old, and contains "slovenly phrases which would never have come from Ben Jonson, or any other good prose writer of the day." Yet our New Testament, according to Mr. Swinburne (and there is no better judge), is translated from canine Greek into divine English. The truth is, the *style* of our Bible is owing to the translators. They lived before the hurry of our cheap periodical press, when men

wrote leisurely for leisured readers. There was also no great accumulation of native literature, and scholars studied almost exclusively the masterpieces of Greece and Rome. Their sense of style was therefore superior. Read the Dedication to King James in our authorised version, then the introduction to our revised version, and see what an immense difference there is between the styles. Or read Paul's noble praise of charity in the two versions. By substituting *love* for *charity*, the revisers have vitiated the sense, and destroyed the balance of the style. Their mincing monosyllable is too weak to bear the structural weight of the clauses. A closer analysis shows that they have spoiled the passage throughout. They had no ear: in other words, no style. The old translators *had* ears, and knew other people had. Their work was meant to be read aloud, and it bears the test. That test is the supreme one, and goes deeper than hearing. Flaubert, a great master of style, always read his manuscript aloud; holding that phrases are right when they correspond to all the necessities of respiration, while ill-written phrases oppress the chest, disturb the beatings of the heart, and contravene the conditions of life. Shakespeare bears this test triumphantly. In his great passages, respiration is easy and pronunciation simple; the language is a splendid and mellifluous stream.

I venture to say in conclusion: Consult the revised version of the Bible for meaning, but read the old one for style. It is a treasury of musical and vigorous Saxon, a well of strong English undefiled; although Hebrew is a poor language, and the Greek of the New Testament is perhaps the worst ever written. But do not think, as Macaulay pretended, that the language of the Bible is sufficient for every purpose. It sustained the genius of Bunyan, but the mightier genius of Shakespeare had to draw from other sources to support its flight. Our English Bible contains six thousand words; Shakespeare's vocabulary contains nine thousand more.

LIVING BY FAITH.

WHAT is Faith? Faith, said Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is a faith that sensible men avoid. The man of reason may have faith, but it will be a faith according to knowledge, and not a faith that dispenses with knowledge. He believes that the sun will rise to-morrow, that the ground will remain firm under his feet, that the seasons will succeed each other in due course, and that if he tills the ground he will reap the harvest. But his belief in these things is based upon experience; his imagination extends the past into the future, and his expectations are determined by his knowledge. The future cannot indeed be demonstrated; it can only be predicted, and prediction can never amount to an absolute certitude; yet it may amount to a height of probability which is practically the same thing. Religious faith, however, is something very different. It is not belief based on evidence, but the evidence and the belief in one. The result is that persons who are full of faith always regard a demand for evidence as at once a heresy and an insult. Their faith seems to them, in the language of Paul, the very *substance* of their hopes; and they often talk of the existence of God and the divinity of Christ as being no less certain than their own existence.

Properly speaking, faith is trust. This involves a wide latitude beyond our knowledge. If we trust a friend, we have faith in him, and we act upon that sentiment. But we are sometimes deceived, and this shows that our faith was in excess of our knowledge. Sometimes, indeed, it is quite independent of knowledge. We trust people because we like them, or because they like us. This infirmity is well known to sharpers and adventurers, who invariably cultivate a

pleasing manner, and generally practise the arts of flattery.

The same principle holds good in religion. It was sagaciously remarked by Hume that we ought to suspect every agreeable belief. The mass of mankind, however, are not so fastidious or discriminating. On the contrary, they frequently believe a thing because it *is* pleasant, and for no other reason. How often have we heard Christian advocates prove the immortality of the soul to the complete satisfaction of their auditors by simply harping on man's desire to live for ever! Nay, there have been many great "philosophers" who have demonstrated the same doctrine by exactly the same means.

Religious faith, to borrow a definition from *Chambers's Dictionary*, is usually "belief in the statement of another." There are a few mystics who profess to hold personal intercourse with God, but the majority of mankind take their religion on trust. They believe it because they were taught it, and those who taught them believed it for the very same reason. When you trace back the revelation to its beginning, you always find that it is derived from men who lived a long time ago, or who perhaps never lived at all. Mohammed vouches for the Koran. Yes, but who will vouch for Mohammed?

Thomas Paine well said that what is revelation to the man who receives it, is only hearsay to the man who gets it at secondhand. If anyone comes to you with a message from God, first button your pockets, and then ask him for his credentials. You will find that he has none. He can only tell you what someone else told him. If you meet the original messenger, he can only cry "thus saith the Lord," and bid you believe or be damned. To such a haughty prophet one might well reply, "My dear sir, what you say may be true, but it is very strange. Return to the being who sent you and ask him to give you better credentials. His word may be proof to you, but yours is no proof to

me; and it seems reasonable to suppose that, if God had anything to tell to me, he could communicate personally to me as well as to you."

In ancient times the prophets who were thus accosted worked miracles in attestation of their mission; but our modern prophets have no such power, and therefore they can scarcely claim our belief. If they ask us why we reject what they tell us on the authority of the ancient prophets who possessed greater powers, we reply that what is a miracle to those who see it is only a story to those who hear it, and that we prefer to see the miracle ourselves. Telling us that a man rose from the dead is no reason why we should believe that three times one are one; it is only proving one wonder by another, and making a fresh draft on our credulity at every step in the demonstration.

There are men who tell us that we should live by faith. But that is impossible for all of us. The clergy live by faith, yet how could they do so if there were not others to support them? Knaves cannot exist without dupes, nor the Church without subscribers.

Living *by* faith is an easy profession. Living *on* faith, however, is more arduous and precarious. Elijah is said to have subsisted on food which was brought him by inspired ravens, but there are few of God's ministers willing to follow his example. They ask God to give them their daily bread, yet they would all shrink with horror from depending on what he sends them.

VICTOR HUGO.*

Two years and a half ago France was mourning the death of Gambetta. Every hostile voice was hushed, and the whole nation bent tearfully over the bier,

* May 31, 1885.

where a once mighty heart and fervent brain lay cold and still in death. Never, perhaps, since Mirabeau burned out the last of his great life had Paris been so profoundly moved. Gambetta was carried to his grave by a million of men, and in all that tremendous procession no priest figured, nor in all the funeral ceremony was there a word of God. For the first time in history a nation buried her hero without a shred of religious rites or a whisper of any other immortality than the immortality of fame.

France now mourns the death of Victor Hugo, the great poet of the Republic, as Gambetta was its great orator and statesman. These two, in their several ways, did the most to demolish the empire. Gambetta organised and led the Republican opposition, and when the *déchéance* came, he played deep for the Republic in the game of life and death, making the restoration of the empire an impossibility. But long before the young orator challenged the empire, it was arraigned before the bar of liberty and humanity by the great poet. From his lonely channel rock, in the bitter grandeur of exile, Victor Hugo hurled the lightnings and thunders of his denunciation at the political burglar of France and his parasitical minions. Practical people laughed at him, not knowing that he was more practical than they. They saw nothing but the petty present, and judged everything by its immediate success. He was nourished by sovereign principles, rooted in the depths of the human heart and blossoming in its loftiest aspirations. He was a prophet who chanted his own inspiration to the world, knowing that few would listen at first, but assured that the message would kindle some hearts, and that the living flame would leap from breast to breast till all were wrapt in its divine blaze. He scorned the base successful lie and reverenced the noble outcast truth, and he had unfaltering faith in the response which mankind would ultimately make to the voice of their rightful lord. Great he was as a poet, a romancer and a dramatist,

but he was greatest as a prophet. He lived to see his message justified and his principles triumphant, and died at the ripe old age of eighty-three, amid the love and reverence of the civilised world. We are not blind to his failings; he had, as the French say, the defects of his qualities. But they do not obscure his glory. His failings were those of other men; his greatness was his own.

Victor Hugo, like Gambetta, was a Freethinker. We know he professed a belief in God, but he had no theology. His God was Nature, suffused with passion and ideality; and his conviction of "Some far-off divine event, To which the whole creation moves," was only his faith in progress, extended into the remotest future. He was a true Freethinker in his grand assertion of the majesty of reason and conscience. He appealed to the native dignity of the individual, and hated priestcraft with a perfect hatred. Lacking humor himself, and brilliant without wit, he could recognise these qualities in others, and he thought them as valid as his own weapons against the dogmas of superstition. How fine was his great word about Voltaire—"Irony incarnate for the salvation of mankind." Like Gambetta, Victor Hugo is to be buried without religious rites, according to his will. No priest is to profane the sanctity of death by mumbling idle words over his grave concerning what he is as ignorant of as the corpse at his feet. In death, as in life, the Freethinker would confront the universe alone from the impregnable rock of his manhood, convinced that

> There is no danger to a man that knows
> What life and death is: there's not any law
> Exceeds his knowledge: neither is it lawful
> That he should stoop to any other law.

Not only did Victor Hugo will that no priest should officiate at his burial, he ordered that none should approach his bed. But the carrion crows of the death-chamber were not to be deterred by his well-known wishes. The Archbishop of Paris offered to visit the

dying heretic and administer to him the supreme unction on behalf of the Church. M. Lockroy, the poet's son-in-law, politely declined the offer. Our newspapers, especially the orthodox ones, regard the Archbishop's message as a compliment. In our opinion it was a brazen insult. Suppose Mr. Bradlaugh wrote to say that he would gladly attend the sickbed of Canon Wilberforce for the purpose of receiving his confession of Atheism; would the orthodox regard it as a compliment or an insult? We fail to see any difference in the two cases, and we know not why impertinence in an Atheist becomes civility in a Christian. Fortunately, Victor Hugo's death-chamber was not intruded upon by impudent priests. His relatives respected his convictions the more as they were Freethinkers themselves. No priest will consecrate his grave, but it will be hallowed by his greatness; and what pilgrim, as he bends over the master's tomb, will hear in the breeze, or see in the grass and flowers, any sign that a priest's benison is wanting to his repose?

DESECRATING A CHURCH.

THERE was a Pantheon at Rome, which was a monument of the religious tolerance of the Empire. It was dedicated, as appears from the inscription on the portico, by Agrippa, son-in-law to the great Augustus, to Jupiter and all the other gods, with the same generosity that prompted the Athenians to erect an altar to the gods that might be unknown. A niche was afforded within its walls to every deity of the provinces

whose devotees were willing to accept the hospitality; and Christ himself might have figured with the rest, if his worshippers did not scorn all other gods but their own.

The old Pantheon still exists, and bears the name of the Rotunda. But it is no longer a Pagan temple. It was re-dedicated by Pope Boniface the Fourth, in A.D. 608, to the Virgin Mary and all the saints. Another Pope, a thousand years later, despoiled it of its ornaments, which had been spared by so many barbarian conquerors. He cast some into cannon, and with the rest formed a high altar for the Church of St. Peter.

These alterations were of course justifiable. They were all made in the interest of Christianity. What could be more proper than the transformation of Pagan temples into Christian churches? What more admirable than devoting to the worship of Christ the edifice which had echoed to the tread of the priests of Jupiter? What more pious than singing the praises of Mary and all the saints in a temple where idolaters had celebrated the glories of all the gods and goddesses of Olympus?

Such is Christian logic. But if the temples of one faith may be so transformed, why may not those of another? If Christianity had the right to devote the temples of Paganism to its own uses, why has not modern civilisation the right to devote the temples of Christianity to Secular purposes?

The Church thinks otherwise. It is at present denouncing the secularisation of the Church of St. Geneviève, in order that Victor Hugo, who died a Freethinker and was buried without religious rites, might repose in an unconsecrated place. This building is the French Pantheon. It was secularised during the Revolution, and dedicated by the Republic, not to the gods of religion, but to the heroes of liberty. When the monarchy was restored it was re-consecrated, and purged of the luciferous taint of Voltaire's dust. But

now the Republic is once more established on the ruins of monarchy and imperialism, it again secularises the Church of St. Geneviève as a tomb for its mighty dead. The Church is naturally indignant, but its anathemas are powerless. God does not interpose, and the Republic is too strong. Nay, there is even a rumor that the Roman Pantheon may be secularised also, and changed into a national mausoleum, where the youth of Italy may bend reverently before the tombs of such glorious soldiers of progress as Mazzini and Garibaldi, instead of honoring the very counterfeit presentment of fabulous old saints, chiefly renowned for their laziness and dirt.

The Church of St. Geneviève is desecrated, cries the Archbishop of Paris, and special prayers are offered up to that ancient lady in heaven to avert her wrath from the infidel city which has so insulted her. In one sense the Archbishop is right. The Church is desecrated in the strict etymological meaning of the word. It has been converted from sacred to secular uses. But in the secondary meaning of the word the building is not desecrated, but honored, by being made a fit receptacle for the mortal remains of Victor Hugo.

A government decree and the removal of the cross on top of the church were the only steps necessary to its desecration. The consecrated character of the temple is gone. To the carnal eye the structure remains unchanged, within and without, except for the loss of a crucifix; but it is quite possible that a priestly nose would be able to scent the absence of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost has fled, angels no more haunt the nave and aisles, and St. Geneviève hides her poor head in grief and humiliation. No doubt; yet we dare say the building will stand none the less firmly, and if it should ever be pulled down, its materials would fetch as much in the market as if they were saturated with divinity.

Consecration is, after all, nothing but a priestly trick. What sensible man believes that the Holy

Ghost, if such a being exist, is at the beck and call of every Catholic or Protestant bishop? Can the "universal spirit" dwell exclusively in certain places? Can the third person of the Trinity have sunk into such an abject state as to dodge in and out of buildings, according as he is wanted or not? Is there any difference that the nose, or any other sensitive organ, can detect between a consecrated church and an unconsecrated chapel? Can the geologist or the chemist discern any difference between the consecrated and the unconsecrated division in a cemetery? Is the earth affected by priestly mutterings? Do the corpses lie any more peacefully, or decompose any more slowly, for the words pronounced over the mould that covers them? Or is there any appreciable virtue in the consecrated water, with which the Protestant and Catholic are alike baptised, and with which the latter sprinkles himself periodically as a preservative against evil? Reason finds no difference; it is perceived only by Faith, which may be defined as the faculty which enables a man to see what does not exist.

WALT WHITMAN.*

WALT WHITMAN'S death can have taken no one by surprise. For years he had been at the brink of the grave, and the end comes as a relief. A great soul may be cheerful, or at least serene, in all circumstances; but there is neither pleasure nor dignity in living on as the ghost of one's self.

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* April, 1892.

Few superber specimens of physical manhood than Walt Whitman's have appeared on this planet. "He looks like a man," said Abraham Lincoln, as his gaze followed the poet past a window of the White House. Whitman stood six feet two, his limbs and torso were splendid, and his head was magnificently proportioned. His vitality must have been wonderful, and his health was absolutely perfect until after the War, during which he too assiduously nursed the sick and wounded, to the lasting detriment of his phenomenal constitution. The flame of his life burnt on for another thirty years, but his strength was seriously undermined, and he is far better entitled to be called a martyr than many who have more cheaply earned the distinction.

Walt Whitman's great personality can hardly be disputed. He impressed himself as something colossal on all who came into close contact with him. The magnetism of his presence in the military hospitals was more sanative than the doctors' physic. Men, women, and children felt glad and satisfied in his company. His large, frank, healthy nature radiated a perpetual benediction. One who knew him intimately has said that he never saw upon Whitman's features any trace of mean or evil passions. The man was thoroughly wholesome. Even his occasionally free utterances on sexuality are only sins against decorum. They do not violate nature. He never spoke on this subject with the slobbery grin of the voluptuary, or the leer of prurience. He was at such moments simply unreticent. Meaning no harm, he suspected none. In this respect he belonged to a less self-conscious antiquity, when nothing pertaining to man was common or unclean, and even the worship of the powers of generation was not without dignity and solemnity.

Some of the foremost Englishmen of our time have acknowledged Whitman's greatness and sanity—notably Carlyle, Ruskin, and Tennyson. Mr. Swinburne is the only one who has unsaid his praise.

Tennyson's intimacy with Whitman—always through correspondence—was simply beautiful. A superficial reader of human nature might have inquired what they had in common—the rough, amorphous American poet, and the exquisite English poet, a flower of millenniums of culture. But there is something deeper than form. It is substance. There is something deeper than language. It is manhood. And on the common ground of the deeper things of life, the American and English poets—otherwise so diverse—clasped hands, as it were, across the sundering ocean.

Whitman's claim to be considered a great poet, or even a poet at all, has been the subject of hot dispute. But such questions are not so settled. Only give time enough, and every writer falls by mere gravitation into his proper place, from which all the controversies in the world can never shift him. Where the evidence is largely subjective, as it must be in appraising genius, there is sure to be much in our judgment that is incommunicable. The logic of events, as we say in politics; or the proof of the pudding, as we say in the vernacular; is not so brilliant as logical sword-play, but it has the merit of being decisive.

Whitman's poetry looks strange to a reader accustomed to conventional models. It positively offends his eyesight. The ear may detect a certain rhythm, but where are the set lengths of orthodox versification? Here, however, there lurks a fallacy. Poetry is not the antithesis of prose. The antithesis of prose is verse. Some of the finest and noblest poetry in the world's literature is not cast in rhyme, though rhythm —often subtler than all possible rules—is indispensable. Yet there is something precious in poetical form; ay, and something durable. Many an exquisite lyric, with no great depth of feeling or reach of thought, has come down the stream of time, and will float upon it for ever. No doubt Dr. Johnson was right in calling it a waste of time to carve cherry-stones, but precious stones are the more valued and

admired for the art of the lapidary. Whitman did not cultivate versification. He almost despised it. He sneered at "dulcet rhymes." Yet this may hinder his access to posterity. Mr. Meredith hints as much in his sonnet entitled "An Orson of the Muse," which surely refers to Whitman. He allows him to be the Muse's son, though he will not wear her livery.

> Him, whom he blows of Earth, and Man, and Fate,
> The Muse will hearken to with graver ear
> Than many of her train can waken: him
> Would fain have taught what fruitful things and dear
> Must sink beneath the tidewaves, of their weight,
> If in no vessel built for sea they swim.

That Whitman, however, could do great things with rhythm, and without rhyme, is proved by his "Funeral Hymn of President Lincoln," which James Thomson ranked with Shelley's "Adonais," and Mr. Swinburne called "the most sublime nocturne ever chanted in the cathedral of the world." That this is a great poem, and will live, we have not the slightest doubt. Some other of Whitman's poems will doubtless live with it, but whole masses of his poetry will probably sink to the bottom—not, however, before doing their work and delivering their message.

Because of his want of form, Whitman suffers more than other poets in extracts. We shall make none, but refer the reader to the whole body of his poetry. Some of it is almost wearisome; the rest will repay study. It contains the utterance of a great soul, full of love and friendship, patriotism and humanity, brooding over the everlasting problems of life and death. Untrammelled by schools and systems, Whitman was a true Freethinker. Cosmopolitan as he was, he preached the gospel of individuality.

> "This is what you shall do: love the earth and the sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and the crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of

men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and mothers of families, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body."

Whitman appealed to the brotherhood of all and the dignity of each. He declared he would have nothing which every other man might not have on equal terms. The business of the great poet was "to cheer up slaves and horrify despots." Men, too, should keep in close communion with Nature, yet always feel that they could "be good or grand only of the consciousness of the supremacy within them."

"What do you think is the grandeur of storms and dismemberments, and the deadliest battles and wrecks, and the wildest fury of the elements, and the power of the sea, and the motion of nature, and of the throes of human desires, and dignity and hate and love? It is that something in the soul which says—Rage on, whirl on, I tread master here and everywhere; master of the spasms of the sky and of the shatter of the sea, of all terror and all pain."

America, perhaps even more than England, has need of Whitman's teaching as the poet of Democracy. He derided "the mania of owning things," he scorned distinctions of caste and class, he sang the divineness of comradeship—and, what is more, he practised it. Full-blooded, strong-limbed, rich-brained, large-hearted men and women are a nation's best products, and if a nation does not yield them, its wealth will only hasten its doom and pollute its grave.

TENNYSON AND THE BIBLE.*

We owe no apology for speaking of the dead poet as "Tennyson." This is how he will be known by posterity. The rank is but the guinea's stamp, and in this case it was not requisite. A true poet's gold can neither be made more precious nor more current by empty titles. In our opinion, it is a degradation, instead of an honor, for one of nature's aristocrats to herd with the artificial nobility of an hereditary peerage. We also take the opportunity of regretting that Tennyson ever became Poet Laureate. The court poet should not survive the court dwarf and the court jester. It is painful to see a great writer grinding out professional odes, and bestowing the excrements of his genius on royal nonentities. The preposterous office of Poet Laureate should now be abolished. No poet should write for a clique or a coterie; he should appeal directly to the heart of the nation.

Tennyson's funeral took place at Westminster Abbey. The heads of that establishment, following the example set by Dean Stanley, now act as body-snatchers. They appropriate the corpses of distinguished men, whether they believed or disbelieved the doctrines of the service read over their coffins. Charles Darwin's body is buried there—the great Agnostic, who repudiated Christianity; Robert Browning's too—the poet who said "I am no Christian" to Robert Buchanan. Carlyle took care that his corpse should not join the museum. Tennyson's, however, is now in the catalogue; and, it must be admitted, with more plausibility than in the case of Browning—with far more than in the case of Darwin.

* October, 1892.

Christian pulpiteers, all over the country, have been shouting their praises of Tennyson as a Christian poet. They are justified in making the most of a man of genius when they possess one. We do not quarrel with them. We only beg to remark that they have overdone it. The Christianity of Tennyson is a very different thing from the Christianity they vend to the credulous multitude.

There is no real evidence that Tennyson accepted the legendary part of Christianity. Even in "In Memoriam," which was published forty-three years ago, the thought is often extremely Pantheistic. It is nearly always so in the later poems. God, not Christ, became more and more the object of the poet's adoration. "Strong Son of God, immortal Love"—the first line of the earlier poem—does not necessarily mean Christ; while the exclamation, "Ring in the Christ that is to be," is more symbolic than personal. There is also a strong hope, rather than the certitude, of a future life. No thoroughly convinced Christian could have written of

> The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,
> Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

Nay, the very deity of Christ is held loosely, if at all, in the thirty-third section, where he

> Whose faith has centre everywhere,
> Nor cares to fix itself to form,

is bidden to leave his sister undisturbed when she prays; the poet exclaiming

> Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
> To which she links a truth divine!

In the last line of the next stanza this "sacred flesh and blood" of Christ (it is to be presumed) is called "a type"—which is a wide departure from orthodox Christianity. And what shall we say of the final lines of the whole poem?

> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

Like other passages of "In Memoriam," it is a distinct anticipation of the thought of "The Higher Pantheism," "Flower in the Crannied Wall," "De Profundis," and "The Ancient Sage."

Much has been made of the "Pilot" in one of Tennyson's last poems, "Crossing the Bar."

> I hope to see my Pilot face to face
> When I have crossed the bar.

This has been treated as a reference to Christ; but a friend of Tennyson's, writing in the *Athenæum*, says that the reference was really to the poet's son, Lionel Tennyson, who "crossed the bar" of death some years previously. How much more natural and human is the reference in the light of this explanation! Yet it appears, after all, from a later letter to the press by Tennyson's surviving son, that he *did* mean Christ. This is not, however, a confession of orthodoxy. The sentiment might be shared by men like the venerable Dr. Martineau, who deny the deity of Christ and strongly dissent from many time-honored Christian teachings.

Tennyson most assuredly revolted against the brutalities of Christianity; which, by the way, are countenanced by very explicit texts in the New Testament. He did not approve the text, "Great is your reward in heaven." He was above such huckstering. He sang of Virtue—

> She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
> To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky.
> Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

A noble petition! though in the teeth of a too patent destiny.

The doctrine of eternal Hell he first turned from, then denounced, and finally despised. It was for wavering as to this hideous dogma that the Rev. F. D. Maurice got into trouble with his College. He was godfather to Tennyson's little boy, and the poet invited him, in exquisitely charming verse, to share his hospitality.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty-thousand college-councils
Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight.

—Tennyson had already, in "In Memoriam," proclaimed himself a Universalist, as Browning did afterwards in his powerful lines on the old Morgue at Paris. He had expressed the hope

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life should be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Such a poet could never see the divinity of the wicked, awful words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." He denounced it in "Despair," a poem of his old age. Well does he make the Agnostic cry out to the minister—

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well?
Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting Hell,
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own;
Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan!

This is fierce denunciation, but it pales before the attack on Hell in "Rizpah"; that splendid poem, which is perhaps the very noblest effort of Tennyson's genius; outweighing hundreds of Balaclava charges and sea-fights; outshining the flawless perfection of "Maud":—a poem written in heart's blood and immortal tears, with a wondrously potent and subtle imagination, and a fire of humanity to burn up whole mountains of brutal superstitions.

The passionate words of the poor old dying mother, full of a deathless love for her boy who was hung, go straight as an arrow to its mark, through all the conventions of society and all the teachings of the Church.

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well,
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.

. . . . . .

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire;
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

Tennyson gives the very essence of the moral revolt against Hell. Human nature has so developed in sympathy that the sufferings of others, though out of sight, afflict our imaginations. We loathe the spectacle of Abraham and Lazarus gazing complacently on the torture of Dives. Once it was not so. Those who were "saved" had little or no care for the "damned." But the best men and women of to-day do not want to be saved alone. They want a common salvation or none. And the mother's heart, which the creeds have trampled upon, hates the thought of any happiness in Heaven while son or daughter is agonising in Hell.

It is perfectly clear that Tennyson was far from an orthodox Christian. Quite as certainly he was not a Bibliolator. He read the Bible, of course; and so did Shelley. There are fine things in it, amidst its falsehoods and barbarities; and the English version is a monument of our literature. We regard as apocryphal, however, the story of Tennyson's telling a boy, "Read the Bible and Shakespeare; the one will teach you how to speak to God, and the other how to speak to your fellow-men." Anyhow, when the poet came to die, he did not ask for the Bible and he did ask for Shakespeare. The copy he habitually used was handed to him; he opened it at "Cymbeline," one of the most pagan of Shakespeare's plays; he read a little, and then held the book until Death came with the fall of "tired eyelids upon tired eyes."

It was a poetic death, and a pagan death. There

lay the aged, world-weary poet; artificial light was withdrawn, and the moonlight streamed through the window upon his noble figure. Wife and son, doctors and nurses, were silent around him. And as Death put the last cold touch on the once passionate heart, it found him still clasping the book of the mighty magician.* Let it be also noted that no Christian priest was at his bedside. He needed not the mumblings of a smaller soul to aid him in his last extremity. Hope he may have had, but no fear. His life ended like a long summer day, slowly dying into night.

CHRIST'S OLD COAT.

THE little town of Trier (Trèves) will soon wear a festive appearance. Pilgrims will be flocking to it from all parts of Germany, and God knows from where besides. Its handful of inhabitants have obtained licenses to open hotels and restaurants; every inch of available space has been let, so that whirligigs, panoramas, and menageries have to be refused the sites

* The present Lord Tennyson wrote as follows to Sir Arthur Hodgson, Chairman of the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trustees: "I beg to convey from my mother and myself our grateful acknowledgment to the Executive Committee of Shakespeare's Birthplace for their most kind expression of sympathy and for their beautiful wreath. My father was reading 'King Lear,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' and 'Cymbeline' through the last days of his life. On Wednesday he asked for Shakespeare. I gave him the book, but said, 'You must not try to read.' He answered, 'I have opened the book.' I looked at the book at midnight when I was sitting by him, lying dead on the Thursday, and found he had opened on one of the passages which he had called the tenderest in Shakespeare. We could not part with this volume, but buried a Shakespeare with him. We had the book enclosed in a metal box and laid by his side.—Yours faithfully, HALLAM TENNYSON."

they apply for; every room in the town is to be let, more or less furnished; and not only is the tram company doubling its line, but the railway company is constructing special stations for special trains.

All this excitement springs from a superstitious source. After an interval of several years the Church will once more exhibit an old rag, which it calls the Holy Coat, and which it pretends is the very garment we read of in the Gospels. Such a precious relic is, of course, endowed with supernatural qualities. It will heal the sick, cure cripples, and, let us hope, put brains into idiotic heads. Hence the contemplated rush to Trier, where more people will congregate to see Christ's coat than ever assembled to hear him preach or see him crucified.

The pilgrims will not be allowed to examine the Holy Coat. Few of them, perhaps, would be inclined to do so. They have the faith which removes mountains, and swallowing a coat is but a trifle. Nor would the Church allow a close inspection of this curious relic, any more than it would allow a chemist to examine the bottle in which the blood of St. Januarius annually liquefies. The Holy Coat will be held up by priests at a discreet and convenient distance; the multitude of fools will fall before it in ecstatic adoration; and the result will be the usual one in such cases, a lightening of the devotees' pockets to the profit of Holy Mother Church.

According to the Gospels, the Prophet of Nazareth had a seamless overcoat. Perhaps it was presented to him by one of the rich women who ministered unto him of their substance. Perhaps it was a birthday gift from Joseph of Arimathæa. Anyhow he had it, unless the Gospels lie; and, with the rest of his clothes, it became the property of his executioners. Those gentlemen raffled for it. Which of them won it we are not informed. Nor are we told what he did with it. It would be a useless garment to a Roman soldier, and perhaps the warrior who won the raffle sold it to a

second-hand clothes-dealer. This, however, is merely a conjecture. Nothing is known with certainty. The seamless overcoat disappeared from view as decisively as the person who wore it.

For many hundreds of years it was supposed to have gone the way of other coats. No one thought it would ever be preserved in a Church museum. But somehow it turned up again, and the Church got possession of it, though the Church could not tell how and when it was found, or where it had been while it was lost. One coat disappeared; hundreds of years afterwards another coat was found; and it suited the Church to declare them the same.

At that time the Church was "discovering" relics with extraordinary success and rapidity. Almost everything Christ ever used (or didn't use) came to light. His baby linen, samples of his hair and teeth, and the milk he drew from Mary's breast, the shoes he wore into Jerusalem, fragments of the twelve baskets' full of food after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the dish from which he ate the last supper, the thorns that crowned his brow, the sponge put to his lips on the cross, pieces of the cross itself—these and a host of other relics were treasured at various churches in Europe, and exhibited with unblushing effrontery. Even the prepuce of Jesus, amputated at his circumcision, was kept at Rome.

Several churches boasted the same articles. John the Baptist's body was in dozens of different places, and the finger with which he pointed to Jesus as his successor was shown, in a fine state of preservation, at Besancon, Toulouse, Lyons, Bourges, Macon, and many other towns.

John Calvin pointed out, in his grim *Treatise on Relics*, that the Holy Coat of Christ was kept in several churches. In our own time, a book on this subject has been written by H. von Sybel, who proves that the Trier coat is only one of twenty that were exhibited. All were authentic, and all were guaranteed by the

same authority. Holy Mother Church lied and cheated without a twinge of compunction.

Nineteen Holy Coats have gone. The twentieth is the last of the tribe. While it *pays* it will be exhibited. When it ceases to pay, the Church will quietly drop it. By and bye the Church will swear it never kept such an article in stock.

Superstition dies hard, and it always dies viciously. The ruling passion is strong in death. A journalist has just been sent to prison for casting a doubt on the authenticity of this Holy Coat. Give the Catholic Church its old power again, and all who laughed at its wretched humbug would be choked with blood.

Protestants, as well as Freethinkers, laugh at Catholic relics. Were we to quote from some of the old English "Reformers," who carried on a vigorous polemic against Catholic "idolatry," we should be reproached for soiling our pages unnecessarily. John Calvin himself, the Genevan pope, declared that so many samples of the Virgin Mary's milk were exhibited in Europe that "one might suppose she was a wet nurse or a cow."

Freethinkers, however, laugh at the miracles of Protestantism, as well as those of the Catholic Church. They are all of a piece, in the ultimate analysis. It is just as credible that Christ's Coat would work miracles, as that Elisha's bones restored a corpse to life, or that Paul's handkerchiefs cured the sick and diseased. All such things belong to the same realm of pious imagination. Thus, while the Protestant laughs at the Catholic, the Freethinker laughs at both.

CHRIST'S COAT, NUMBER TWO.

JESUS CHRIST is urgently required on earth again, to settle the pious dispute between Trèves and Argenteuil as to which possesses the real seamless coat that was taken from him at the Crucifixion and raffled for by the Roman soldiers. No one but the second person of the Trinity, unless it be the first or third person of that three-headed monstrosity, is adequate to the settlement of this distracting quarrel. Even the Papacy, which represents the Holy Trinity on earth, is at variance with itself. Pope Leo favors Trèves, and the wicked pilgrims who visit that little old town are to obtain absolution, if they do not forget to "pray for the extirpation of erroneous doctrines." Pope Pius, his predecessor, however, favored Argenteuil. A portion of the Holy Coat treasured in the church there was sent to him, and in return for the precious gift he forwarded a well-blessed and marvellously-decorated wax taper, which is still on show in a fine state of preservation.

When Popes differ, ordinary people, like pious Christians, and even the editors of Freethought journals, may be excused if they hesitate to commit themselves. One of these coats *may* be the true one, though the evidence is all against it, being in fact of such a shaky nature that it would hardly suffice to substantiate a claim to a bunch of radishes. But *both* of them *cannot* be authentic, and the problem is, which is the very coat that Jesus wore? Now it is obvious that no one—barring his two colleagues aforesaid—can possibly determine this question but himself. His re-appearance on earth is therefore most desirable; nay, it is absolutely necessary, unless a lot of people who would fain bow before the cast-off clothes of their Redeemer are either to stay at home in a state of

dubiety or to incur the risk of kneeling before a mouldy old rag that perchance belonged to a Moorish slave or a Syrian water-carrier—in any case, to a dog of an infidel who spat at the very name of Christ, for such raiment was never worn by the worshippers of the Nazarene.

If Christ is coming to decide this great and grave problem, he will have to make haste, for Argenteuil is already on the war-path. Its Holy Coat is being exhibited before that of Trèves, and thousands of pilgrims are giving Number Two the preference. Presently the Trèves relic will attract its thousands, and the spectacle will be positively scandalous. Two Richmonds in the field were nothing to two Christ's Coats, each pretending to be the real article, and each blessed by a Pope. For the sake of decency as well as truth, Christ should peremptorily interfere. It is difficult to see how he can refrain. The Second Advent may therefore be expected before the date assigned by Prophet Baxter, and we shall probably soon hear the faithful singing "Lo he comes in clouds descending."

Why should he not come? we may ask the Catholics. His mother has often appeared, if we may believe the solemn affidavits of priests and bishops, backed up by the Holy See. Why should he not come? we may also ask the Protestants. His second coming is an article of their faith; it is plainly taught in the New Testament, and was recently propounded by Mr. Spurgeon as part of the irreducible minimum of the Christian faith. That he will come, then, may be taken for granted; and what better opportunity could be desired than the present? Surely the faithful, all over Europe—ay, and in America, to say nothing of Asia, Africa, and Australia—will cry like one man, "Come Lord Jesus, quickly come! Tell us, oh tell us, which of these mouldy old rags did once grace thy holy shoulders? Save us, oh save us, from the pain, the ignominy of adoring a dirty relic of some unknown

sinner, who perhaps blasphemed thy holy name. Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!"

Meanwhile we may point out that, if Christ does not come and adjudicate between Trèves and Argenteuil, a multitude of Christians will certainly go on a fool's errand. Our private opinion is that all will do so who visit either of these places. Nevertheless they will no doubt congratulate themselves, if they go to Trèves, on winning absolution. The Holy Father at Rome, who has a supernatural dispensing power, promises to wipe out the record of their sins. Liars, cheats, seducers, adulterers, and undetected assassins, may take a trip, perform genuflexions before something in a glass case, and return home with a clean record. Who can conceive an easier method of avoiding the consequences of wickedness? As for the prayer which the pilgrims are to offer up for "the extirpation of erroneous doctrines," it will cost them very little effort, for sinners who are washed clean with such delightful celerity are not likely to be in love with "erroneous doctrines" that declare the Pope's dispensing power a sham, and sternly tell men that the consequences of action, whether good or bad, are inevitable. We very much doubt, however, if "erroneous doctrines" will disappear through the prayers of the pilgrims or the curses of the Pope. Scepticism will probably gain by the spectacle of two rival Coats of Christ, both exhibited at the same time, both attracting crowds of devotees, and both enjoying the Papal blessing. It will bring superstition into still further contempt, and promote the rejection of a creed which has ever traded on ignorance and credulity.

SCOTCHED, NOT SLAIN.

THOSE who have read the foregoing articles on the Holy Coat exhibitions at Trèves and Argenteuil may think that enough space has been devoted to such a ridiculous subject. It is possible, however, that the present article will induce them to alter that opinion.

Hitherto we have treated this outburst of Christian superstition with jocosity, but there is a serious aspect of it which must not be neglected. Christianity has often made Freethinkers laugh, but not unfrequently it has made them weep tears of blood. Absurdity is not always a laughing matter. There was a comic side to the orthodox persecution of Charles Bradlaugh—but it killed him. Bigotry and superstition are fit subjects for jest and ridicule; when they gain power, however, they are apt to substitute agony for laughter. Celsus ridiculed Christianity in the second century; in the fourth his writings were absolutely destroyed, and those who shared his opinions, and dared to express them, were on the high road to the prison and the stake.

More recent events teach the same lesson. Thomas Paine treated Christianity not only with trenchant argument, but also with brilliant derision. For this he suffered ostracism and calumny, and for publishing the *Age of Reason* Richard Carlile, his wife, his sister, and his shopmen rotted in English gaols. The *Freethinker* derided Christian absurdities, and its conductors were sent to herd with criminals in a Christian prison. Nearly everyone thought, as Sir James Stephen declared in a legal text-book, that the Blasphemy Laws were obsolete; but it was proved by the inexorable logic of fact that laws are never obsolete until they are repealed. While the Blasphemy Laws exist they are always liable to enforcement. They are the standing

menace of an absurd creed to those who smile at it too ostentatiously.

Let us extend the same line of reflection to this Holy Coat business. Contemptible as it is to the eye of reason, it excites the piety of millions of persons who never reasoned on religion in the whole course of their lives. Hundreds of thousands of men and women will visit these sham relics of a Savior whose own existence is open to dispute. Superstition will be stirred to its depths. The bestial instinct of spiritual slavery inherited from ancient semi-human progenitors will be intensely stimulated. The sacred function of priests will be heightened and intensified. Nor must it be forgotten that the pecuniary offerings of the pilgrims will fill the coffers of Holy Mother Church, who promises heaven to her dupes and seizes wealth and power for herself on earth.

Superstition is scotched, but not slain. It has life enough to be a peril to civilisation. The faith which wrecked "the grandeur that was Greece and the glory that was Rome"—the faith which buried the science, art, philosophy and literature of antiquity under a monstrous heap of brutal rubbish, out of which they were slowly and painfully excavated after the lapse of a thousand years—this same faith is still a danger to the highest welfare of mankind; to its reason, its conscience, its sense of dignity, and its spirit of brotherhood; above all, to freedom of thought, which is the sole guarantee of real and durable progress.

If we turn to Russia, we see at a single glance the fruits of superstition and its twin-sister tyranny. The Czar is the head of the Church and the head of the State; not like Queen Victoria, whose sacred function is only indicated in Latin on our coinage, but in literal, prosaic fact. By means of a swarm of ignorant, and often drunken and immoral priests, the masses of the people are kept in wretched subjection—hewers of wood and drawers of water, toilers for the huge army of officials, aristocrats, and princes—and conscripts for

the army; while the best and noblest, in whom there still throbs the pulse of freedom, blacken the highways to the mines of Siberia, where hell is more than realised on earth, and the dreams of sour-blooded theologians are outdone in misery and horror.

Over the rest of Europe, even in France, the secular State is often as insecure as the footsteps of travellers over thin crusts of volcanic soil. Bismarck, the Titan, whose great work, with all its defects and failings, may appeal from the clamorous passing hour to the quiet verdict of history, only kept the Catholic Church and its Jesuits in check for a generation. He could not impair its vitality nor diminish its latent power. It is in Germany that the Coat of Christ is being exhibited, with priests and professors joining hands at the brazen ceremony of imposture; in Germany that myriads of pilgrims are wending their way to the shrine of an idolatry as ignominious as anything that Christianity ever supplanted.

Even in France the one great danger to the Republic is Christian superstition. It is the Church, her priests and her devotees, that furnish the real strength of every reactionary movement. That consummate charlatan, General Boulanger, took to going to church and cultivating orthodoxy when at the height of his aspiration for power. Happily he was defeated by the men of light and leading. Happily, too, the ablest and most trusted leaders of public life in France are on the side of Freethought. It is this, more than anything else, that makes the country of Voltaire the beacon of civilisation as well as the "martyr of democracy."

Charles Bradlaugh, on a very solemn occasion, warned the Freethought party that even in England their great fight would ultimately be with the Catholic Church. He knew that superstition was scotched, but he also knew it was far from slain. While Freethinkers are laughing at this exhibition of old rags, called the Coat of Christ, they should pause for a moment to consider the serious meaning of such a

grotesque display of superstition in the land of Goethe and Heine, and in the age of Darwin. Let us jest round our camp-fires, but let us grip our sword-hilts as we hear the cries, the jingle of weapons, and the tramp of men in the camp of our enemy.

GOD-MAKING.

"MAN is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a flea, and yet he will be making gods by dozens." So wrote honest Montaigne, the first great sceptic in modern history, who was so far in advance of his age that he surprised the world by venturing to doubt whether it was after all a just and sensible thing to burn a man alive for differing from his neighbors.

The history of that mental aberration which is called religion, and a survey of the present state of the world, from the fetish worshipper of central Africa to the super-subtle Theist of educated Europe, furnish us with countless illustrations of the truth of Montaigne's exclamation. God-making has always been a prevalent pastime, although it has less attraction for the modern than for the ancient mind. It was a recreation in which everyone could indulge, whether learned or illiterate, young or old, rich or poor. All the material needed to fashion gods of was ignorance, and there was always an unlimited stock of that article. The artificer was imagination, a glorious faculty, which is the highest dower of the creative artist and the scientific discoverer, and in their service is fruitful in usefulness and beauty, but which in the service of theology is a frightful curse,

filling the mental world with fantastic monsters who waylay and devour.

Common people, however, who did the work of the world, were not able to do much god-making. Their leisure and ability were both limited. But they had a large capacity for admiring the productions of others, and their deficiencies were supplied by a special class of men, called priests, who were set apart for the manufacture of deities, and who devoted their time and their powers to the holy trade. This pious division of labor, this specialisation of function, still continues. Carpenters and tailors, grocers and butchers, who are immersed all the week in labor or business, have no opportunity for long excursions in the field of divinity; and therefore they take their religion at second hand from the priest on Sunday. It was not the multitude, but the sacred specialists, who built up the gigantic and elaborate edifice of theology, which is a purely arbitrary construction, deriving all its design and coherence from the instinctive logic of the human mind, that operates alike in a fairy tale and in a syllogism.

Primitive man used conveniently-shaped flints before he fashioned flint instruments; discovery always preceding invention. In like manner he found gods before he made them. A charm resides in some natural object, such as a fish's tooth, a queer-shaped pebble, or a jewel, and it is worn as an amulet to favor and protect. This is fetishism. By-and-bye counterfeits are made of animals and men, or amalgams of both, and the fetishistic sentiment is transferred to these. This is the beginning of polytheism. And how far it extends even into civilised periods, let the superstitions of Europe attest. The nun who tells her beads, and the lady who wears an ornamental crucifix, are to some extent fetishists; while the Catholic worship of saints is only polytheism in disguise.

Reading the Bible with clear eyes, we see that the ancient Jews worshipped gods of their own making, which were handed down as family relics. When

Jacob made tracks after sucking his uncle dry, Rachel carried off the poor old fellow's teraphim, and left him without even a god to worship. Jahveh himself, who has since developed into God the Father, was originally nothing but an image in an ark. Micah, in the book of Judges, makes himself a houseful of gods, and hires a Levite as his domestic chaplain. How long the practice persisted we may judge from the royal scorn which Isaiah pours on the image-mongers, who hewed down cedars and cypresses, oaks and ashes, some for fuel and some for idols. Let us hear the great prophet: "He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god."

Twenty-six centuries have elapsed since Isaiah wrote that biting satire, yet image-worship still prevails over three-fourths of the world; and even in Christian countries, to use Browning's phrase, we "see God made and eaten every day." A wave of the hand and a muttered spell, change bread or wafer and port-wine into the body and blood of Christ, which are joyously consumed by hi· cannibal worshippers.

Not even the higher divinities of the greater faiths are exempt from the universal law. They are not creatures of man's hand, yet they are creatures of his brain. What are they but his own fancies, brooded on till they become facts of memory, and seem to possess an objective existence? The process is natural and easy. A figment of the imagination may become intensely real. Have we not a clearer idea of Hamlet and Othello than of half our closest acquaintances? Feuerbach went straight to the mark when he aimed to prove "that the powers before which man crouches are the creatures of his own limited, ignorant, uncultured and timorous mind, and that in especial the being whom

man sets over against himself as a separate supernatural existence in his own being."

Yes, all theology is anthropomorphism—the making of gods in man's image. What is the God of our own theology, as Matthew Arnold puts it, but a magnified man? We cannot transcend our own natures, even in imagination; we can only interpret the universe in the terms of our own consciousness, nor can we endow our gods with any other attributes than we possess ourselves. When we seek to penetrate the "mystery of the infinite," we see nothing but our own shadow and hear nothing but the echo of our own voice.

As we are so are our gods, and what man worships is what he himself would be. The placid Egyptian nature smiles on the face of the sphinx. The gods of India reflect the terror of its heat and its beasts and serpents, the fertility of its soil, and the exuberance of its people's imagination. The glorious Pantheon of Greece—

> Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
> Fill the hushed air with everlasting love—

embodies the wise and graceful fancies of the noblest race that ever adorned the earth, compared with whose mythology the Christian system is a hideous nightmare. The Roman gods wear a sterner look, befitting their practical and imperial worshippers, and Jove himself is the ideal genius of the eternal city. The deities of the old Scandinavians, whose blood tinges our English veins, were fierce and warlike as themselves, with strong hands, supple wrists, mighty thews, lofty stature, grey-blue eyes and tawny hair. Thus has it ever been. So Man created god in his own image, in the image of Man created he him; male and female created he them.

GOD AND THE WEATHER.

With characteristic inconsistency the Christian will exclaim "Here is another blasphemous title. What has God to do with the weather?" Everything, sir. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge, and do you think he fails to regulate the clouds? The hairs of your head are numbered, and do you think he cannot count the rain-drops? Besides, your clergy pray for a change in the weather when they find it necessary; and to whom do they pray but God? True, they are getting chary of such requests, but the theory is not disavowed, nor can it be unless the Bible is discarded as waste-paper; and the forms of supplication for rain and fine weather still remain in the Prayer Book, although many parsons must feel like the parish clerk who asked "What's the use of praying for rain with the wind in that quarter?"

We might also observe that as God is omnipotent he does everything, or at least everything which is not left (as parsons would say) to man's freewill, and clearly the weather is not included in that list. God is also omniscient, and what he foresees and does not alter is virtually his own work. Even if a tile drops on a man's head in a gale of wind, it falls, like the sparrow, by a divine rule; and it is really the Lord who batters the poor fellow's skull. An action for assault would undoubtedly lie, if there were any court in which the case could be pleaded. What a frightful total of damages would be run up against the defendant if every plaintiff got a proper verdict! For, besides all the injuries inflicted on mankind by "accident," which only means the Lord's malice or neglect, it is a solemn fact (on the Theist's hypothesis) that God has killed every man, woman, and child that ever died since the human race began. We are born here without being consulted, and hurried away without the least regard to our convenience.

But let us keep to the weather. A gentleman who was feeding the fish at sea heard a sailor singing "Britannia rules the waves." "Does she?" he groaned, "Then I wish she'd rule them straighter." Most of us might as fervently wish that the Lord ruled the weather better. Some parts of the world are parched and others flooded. In some places the crops are spoiled with too much sun, and in others with too little. Some people sigh for the sight of a cloud, and others people see nothing else. Occasionally a famine occurs in India which might have been averted by half our superfluity of water. Even at home the weather is always more or less of a plague. Its variation is so great that it is always a safe topic of conversation. You may go out in the morning with a light heart, tempted by the sunshine to leave your overcoat and umbrella at home; and in the evening you may return wet through, with a sensation in the nose that prognosticates a doctor's bill. You may enter a theatre, or a hall, with dry feet, and walk home through a deluge. In the morning a south wind breathes like zephyr on your cheeks, and in the evening your face is pinched with a vile and freezing north-easter.

"Oh," say the pious, "it would be hard to please everybody, and foolish to try it. Remember the old man and his ass." Perhaps so, but the Lord should have thought of that before he made us; and if he cannot give us all we want, he might show us a little consideration now and then. But instead of occasionally accommodating the weather to us, he invariably makes us accommodate ourselves to the weather. That is, if we can. But we cannot, at any rate in a climate like this. Men cannot be walking almanacks, nor carry about a wardrobe to suit all contingencies. In the long run the weather gets the better of the wisest and toughest, and when the doctors have done with us we head our own funeral procession. The doctor's certificate says asthma, bronchitis, pulmonary con-

sumption, or something of that sort. But the document ought to read "Died of the weather."

Poets have sung the glory of snowy landscapes, and there is no prettier sight than the earth covered with a virgin mantle, on which the trees gleam like silver jewels. But what an abomination snow is in cities. The slush seems all the blacker for its whiteness, and the pure flakes turn into the vilest mud. Men and horses are in a purgatory. Gloom sits on every face. Pedestrians trudge along, glaring at each other with murderous eyes; and the amount of swearing done is enough to prove the whole thing a beastly mistake.

It seems perfectly clear that when the Lord designed the weather, two or three hundred million years ago, he forgot that men would build cities. He continues to treat us as agriculturalists, even in a manufacturing and commercial country like this. Why should people get drenched in Fleet-street while the Buckinghamshire farmers want rain? The arrangement is obviously stupid. God Almighty ought to drop the rain and snow in the country, and only turn on enough water in the cities to flush the sewers. He ought also to let the rain fall in the night. During the daytime we want the world for our business and pleasure, and the Rain Department should operate when we are snug in bed. This is a reforming age. Gods, as well as men, must move on. It is really ridiculous for the Clerk of the Weather to be acting on the old lines when everybody down below can see they are behind the time. If he does not improve we shall have to agitate on the subject. Home Rule is the order of the day. We need Home for the globe, and we cannot afford to let the weather be included in the imperial functions. It is a domestic affair. And as the Lord has considerably mismanaged it, he had better hand it over to us, with full power to arrange it as we please.

MIRACLES.

WHAT is a miracle? Some people would reply, an act of God. But this definition is far too wide. In the theistic sense, it would include everything that happens; and in the sense of our archaic bills of lading, it would include fire and shipwreck.

Others would reply, a miracle is a wonder. But this definition would include every new, or at least every surprising new fact. A black swan would have been a wonder before Australia was discovered, but it would have been no miracle. Railways, telegraphs, telephones, electric light, and even gas light, would be wonders to savages, yet neither are they miracles. One of the Mahdi's followers was astonished by an English officer, who pulled out his false eye, tossed it in the air, caught it, and replaced it; after which he asked the flabbergasted Arab whether his miraculous Mahdi could do that. It was a greater wonder than the Mahdi could perform; still it was not a miracle. Ice was so great a wonder to the King of Siam that he refused to credit its existence. Yet it was not miraculous, but a natural product, existing in practically unlimited quantities in the polar regions. We might multiply these illustrations *ad infinitum*, but what we have given will suffice. If not, let the reader spend an evening at Maskelyne and Cooke's, where he will see plenty of startling wonders and not a miracle amongst them.

Hume's definition of a miracle as a violation of a law of nature, is the best ever given, and it really is as perfect as such a definition can be. It has been carped at by Christian scribblers, and criticised by superior theologians like Mozley. But, to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, it keeps the field. Even the criticisms of Mill and Huxley leave its merit unimpaired. The ground taken by these is, that to say a miracle is a viola-

tion of a law of nature is to prejudge the question, and to rule out all future facts in the interest of a prepossession. Mill, however, allows that a miracle is a violation of a valid induction, and as a law of nature means nothing more it is difficult to understand why he takes any exception to Hume's statement of the case. It is perfectly obvious that Hume's argument is not metaphysical, but practical. He does not discuss the *possibility* but the *probability* of miracles. He reduces the dispute to a single point, namely, whether the person who relates a miracle (for to the world at large the question is necessarily one of testimony) is deceived or deceiving, or whether the otherwise universal experience of mankind is to be disbelieved; in other words, whether he or the rest of the world is mistaken. One man may, of course, be right, and all the human race opposed to him wrong, but time will settle the difference between them. That *time*, however, simply means general experience through long ages; and that is precisely the tribunal which Hume's argument appeals to.

Quarrelling with Hume's definition is really giving up miracles altogether, for, except as supernatural evidence, they are no more important than shooting stars. The very nature of a miracle, in whatever formula it may be expressed, is superhuman, and having a purpose, it is also supernatural; in other words, it is a special manifestation of divine power for a particular object. Whether, being so, it is a violation, a contravention, or a suspension of the laws of nature, is a mere question about words.

We may say that a miracle has three elements. It is first a fact, unaccountable by science; secondly, it requires a conscious agent; and thirdly, it results from the exercise of a power which that agent does not naturally possess.

Let us descend to illustration. Huxley takes the following case. Suppose the greatest physiologist in Europe alleged that he had seen a centaur, a fabulous

animal, half man and half horse. The presumption would be that he was laboring under hallucination; but if he persisted in the statement he would have to submit to the most rigorous criticism by his scientific colleagues before it could be believed; and everybody would feel sure beforehand that he would never pass through the ordeal successfully. The common experience, and therefore the common sense, of society would be dead against him, and probably he would be refused the honor of examination even by the most fervid believers in ancient miracles.

But after all the centaur, even if it existed, would not be a miracle, but a monstrosity. It does not contain the three elements we have indicated. Real miracles would be of a different character. Plenty may be found in the Bible, and we may make a selection to illustrate our argument. Jesus Christ was once at a marriage feast, when the wine ran short, which was perhaps no uncommon occurrence. Being of a benevolent turn of mind, and anxious that the guests should remember the occasion, he turned a large quantity of cold water into fermented juice of the grape. Now water contains oxygen and hydrogen in definite proportions, and nothing else, while wine contains in addition to these, carbon and other elements, being in fact a very complex liquid. Jesus Christ must, therefore, in turning water into wine, have created something, and that transcends human power. Here, then, we have a complete miracle, according to Hume's definition and our own theory.

We do not say the miracle never occurred, although we no more believe in it than we believe the moon is made of green cheese. We are willing to regard it as susceptible of proof. But does the proof exist? To answer this we must inquire what kind of proof is necessary. An extraordinary story should be supported by extraordinary evidence. It requires the concurrent and overwhelming testimony of eye-witnesses. We must be persuaded that there is no collusion between

them, that none of them has anything to gain by deception, that they had no previous tendency to expect such a thing, and that it was practically impossible that they could be deluded. Now let any man or any Christian seriously ask himself whether the evidence for Jesus Christ's miracle is of this character. Four evangelists write his life, and only one mentions the occurrence. Even he was certainly not an eye-witness, nor does he pretend to be, and the weight of evidence is against his gospel having been written till long after the first disciples of Jesus were dead. But even if the writer distinctly declared himself an eye-witness, and if it were undeniable that he lived on the spot at the time, his single unsupported testimony would be absurdly inadequate to establish the truth of the miracle. Every reader will at once see that the established rules of evidence are not conformed to, and whoever accepts the miracle must eke out reason with faith.

So much for the evidence of miracles. Their intellectual or moral value is simply nil. The greatest miracle could not really convince a man of what his reason condemned; and if a prophet could turn water into wine, it would not necessarily follow that all he said was true. In fact, truth does not require the support of miracles; it flourishes better without their assistance. Universal history shows that miracles have always been employed to support falsehood and fraud, to promote superstition, and to enhance the profit and power of priests.

A REAL MIRACLE.*

It is a common belief among Protestants, though not among Catholics, that the age of miracles is past. For a long time it has been very difficult to find a real case of special providence. There are stories afloat of wonderful faith-cures, and the followers of John Wesley, as well as the followers of William Booth, often shake their heads mysteriously, and affect to trace the hand of God in certain episodes of their experience. But such cases are too personal, and too subjective, to challenge criticism or inquiry. Investigating them is like exploring a cloud. There is nothing tangible for the mind to seize, nothing to stand by as the basis of discussion. What is wanted is a real objective miracle, a positive *fact*. Happily such a miracle has come to the aid of a distressed Christianity; it is worth tons of learned apologetics, and will give "the dying creed" a fresh lease of life.

Unfortunately the world at large is in gross ignorance of this astonishing event. Like the earthquake, the eclipse, and the wholesale resurrection of saints at the crucifixion of Christ, it has excited very little public attention. But this dense apathy, or Satanic conspiracy of silence, must not be allowed to hide a precious truth. We therefore do our best to give it publicity, although in doing so we are blasting our own foundations; for we belong to a party which boasts that it seeks for truth, and we are ready to exclaim, "Let truth prevail though the heavens fall."

Most of our readers will remember the late accident on the Brighton line at Norwood. A bridge collapsed, and only the driver's presence of mind averted a great loss of life. Of course the driver did his obvious duty, and presence of mind is not uncommon

* May, 1891.

enough to be miraculous. But that does not exhaust the matter. The driver (Hargraves) is perfectly sure he received divine assistance. He is a man of pious habits. He never leaves his house without kneeling down with his wife and imploring God's protection. He never steps on the engine without breathing another prayer. On the morning of the accident his piety was in a state of unusual excitation. He begged his wife to "pray all that day"—which we presume she did, with intervals for refreshment; and he knelt down himself in the passage before opening his front door. When the accident happened he put the brake on and cried "Lord, save us," and according to the *Christian World* "it has since been stated by expert engineers that no train was ever before pulled up in such a short distance."

A carping critic might presume to ask the names and addresses of these "expert engineers." He might also have the temerity to inquire the precise distance in which the train was pulled up, the shortest distance in which other trains have been pulled up, and the weight and velocity of the train in each case. He might also meanly suggest that putting on the brake left as little as possible to Providence. For our part, however, we will not pursue such hypercriticism. It is applying to a miracle a test which it is not fitted to stand. Something must be left to faith, something must be reserved from reason, or the stoutest miracle would soon fall into a galloping consumption. The man in whom a pious disposition counteracts the restless play of thought, will not demand absolute proof; he will only require an encouraging amount of evidence; and he will dutifully lift his face and hands to heaven, exclaiming, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

The line we shall follow is a different one. Without questioning the miracle, we venture to ask why it was not more complete. Lives were saved, but several persons were injured. Was this due to the

fact that Hargraves' prayer was not sufficiently above proof? Did the Lord answer the prayer according to its insensity? Was there a sceptic in the train who partially neutralised its effect? Or did the Lord proceed on the method favored by priests, preventing the miracle from being too obvious, but giving the incident a slightly supernatural appearance, in order to confirm the faith of believers without convincing the callous sceptics, whose deep sin of incredulity places them beyond "the means of grace and the hope of glory?"

Nor are these questions exhaustive. Very much remains to be said. It appears that the Norwood bridge collapsed through a secret flaw in the iron-work. Could not the Lord, therefore, in answer to Hargraves' prayers—which surely extended to the interests of his employers—have inspired one of the Company's engineers with the notion of some unsoundness in the structure? This would have saved a good deal of property, and many passengers from suffering a shock whose effects may haunt them for years, and perhaps send them to untimely graves? Might not the Lord have cleared the roadway below, knocked down the bridge in the night, and brought some one to see the collapse who could have carried the tidings to the signalmen? Certainly there seems a remarkable want of subtlety in the ways of Providence. It looks as though the Deity heard a prayer now and then, and jerked out a bit of miracle in a more or less promiscuous manner.

What has happened to Providence since the Bible days? Miracles then were clear, convincing, and artistically rounded. You could not possibly mistake them for anything else. Baalam's ass, for instance, was not a performing "moke"; it does not appear to have known a single trick; and when it opened its mouth and talked in good Moabitish, the miracle was certain and triumphant. In the same way, the Norwood miracle might have been unadul-

terated with the usual operations of nature. The bridge might have collapsed as the train approached, driver Hargraves might have said his prayer, the train might have leapt across the chasm, picked up the connection on the other side, and pursued its way to Brighton as if nothing had happened. But as the case stands, Providence and the safety-brake act together, and it is difficult to decide their shares in the enterprise. Further, the miracle is sadly mixed. Any human being would have planned it better, and made it stand out clearly and firmly.

This Norwood miracle, however, seems the best obtainable in these days. It is a minute return for all the prayers of the clergy, to say nothing of pious engine-drivers; a miserable dividend on the gigantic investment in supernaturalism. We pity the poor shareholders, though we must congratulate the directors on the large salaries they draw from the business. We also pity poor old Providence, who seems almost played out. Once upon a time he was in fine form; miracles were as common as blackberries; Nature seldom got an innings, and Jehovah was all over the field. But nowadays Nature seems to have got the better of him. She scarcely leaves him a corner for his operations, and what little he does (if he does anything) has to be done in obscurity. Poor old Providence, we fancy, has had his day. His vigor is gone, his lively fancy has degenerated into moping ineptitude, the shouts of millions of worshippers cannot stimulate his sluggishness into any more effective display than this Norwood miracle. Most sincerely we offer him our condolence as the sleeping partner in the business of religion. By and bye we may offer our condolence to the active partners, the priests of all denominations, who still flourish on a prospectus which, if once true, is now clearly fraudulent. When their business dwindles, in consequence of a failing supply of good supernatural

articles, they will only live on the price of actual deliveries, and a Norwood miracle will hardly afford six of them a mouthful apiece.

JESUS ON WOMEN.

"For religions," says Michelet, "woman is mother, tender guardian, and faithful nurse. The gods are like men; they are reared, and they die, upon her bosom." Truer words were never uttered. Michelet showed in *La Sorcière*, from which this extract is taken, as well as in many other writings, that he fully understood the fulcrum of priestcraft and the secret of superstition. Women are everywhere the chief, and in some places the only, supporters of religion. Even in Paris, where Freethinkers abound, the women go to church and favor the priest. Naturally, they impress their own views on the children, for while the father's influence is fitful through his absence from home, the mother's is constant and therefore permanent. Again and again the clergy have restored their broken power by the hold upon that sex which men pretend to think the weaker, although they are obviously the sovereigns of every generation. Men may resolve to go where they please, but if they cannot take the women with them they will never make the journey. Women do not resist progress, they simply stand still, and by their real, though disguised, rule over the family, they keep the world with them. Freethinkers should look this fact in the face. Blinking it is futile. Whoever does that imitates the hunted ostrich, who does not escape his doom by hiding his head. The whole question lies

in a nutshell. Where one sex is, the other will be; and there is a terrible, yet withal a beautiful, truth in the upshot of Mill's argument, that if men do not lift women up, women will drag men down. In the education and elevation of women, then, lies the great hope of the future. Leading Freethinkers have always seen this. Shelley's great cry, "Can man be free if woman be a slave?" is one witness, and Mill's great essay on *The Subjection of Women* is another.

Go where you will, you find the priests courting the women. They act thus, not because they despise men, or fear them, but because they (often unconsciously) feel that when they have captured the "weaker" sex, the other becomes a speedy prey. Perhaps a dim perception of this truth hovered in the minds of those who composed the story of the Fall. The serpent does not bother about Adam. He just makes sure of Eve, and she settles her "stronger" half. Milton makes Adam reluct and wrangle, but it is easy to see he will succumb to his wife's persuasions. He swears he won't eat, but Eve draws him all the time with a silken string, mightier than the biggest cable.

When the Christian monks were proselytising at Rome, they were hated, says Jortin, "as beggarly impostors and hungry Greeks who seduced ladies of fortune and quality." Hated, yes; but what did the hatred avail? The women were won, and the game was over. Men growled, but they had to yield. The same holds good to-day. Watch the congregations streaming out of church, count ten bonnets to one hat, and you might fancy Christianity played out because the men stay at home and neglect its ministrations. Nothing of the sort. Men may desert the churches as they like, but while the women go the clergy are safe. Examine the church and chapel organisations closely, and you will see how nine-tenths of everything is designed for women and children. Yes, the bonnet is the priest's talisman. Like Constantine's legendary cross, it bears the sign *By this Conquer.*

On the other hand, the clergy never fail to remind women that religion is their best friend. Without our doctrines and our holy Church, they say, there would be social chaos; the wild passions of men would spurn control, marriage would be despised, wives would become mistresses, homes would disappear, and children would be treated as encumbrances. There is not a grain of truth in this, for religion has fomented, countenanced, or cloaked, more sensuality and selfishness than it has ever repressed. But it is a powerful appeal to woman's healthy domestic sentiment. She feels, if she does not know, that marriage is her sheet-anchor, and the home an ark on a weltering flood. When the priest tells her that religion is the surety of both, he plucks at her heart, which vibrates to its depths, and she regards him as her savior.

Historically, the Christian religion, at least, has never been woman's real friend. It claims credit for everything; but what has it achieved? Monogamy was practised by the rude Teutons before Christianity "converted" them by fraud and force, and it was the law in pagan Greece and Rome before the Christian era. Yet in the Bible there is not a word against polygamy. God's favorites had as many wives as they could manage, and Solomon had enough to manage *him*. In the New Testament there is only one man who is told to be "the husband of one wife," and that is a bishop. Even in *his* case, a facetious sceptic hints, and the Mormons argue, that the command only means that he must have *one wife at least.*

There are two supreme figures in the New Testament, Paul and Jesus. What Paul says about women I will deal with presently. For the moment I confine myself to Jesus. Let the reader remember that Christianity cannot transcend the Bible, any more than a stream can rise above its source.

Like most revivalists and popular preachers, Jesus had a number of women dangling at his heels, but his

teaching on the subject in hand is barren, or worse. As a child, he gave his mother the slip at Jerusalem, and caused her much anxiety. During his minstry, when his mother and his brethren wished to speak with him, he forgot the natural ties of blood, and coolly remarked that his family were those who believed his gospel. On another occasion he roughly said to Mary, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" These examples are not very edifying. If Christ is our great exemplar, the fashion he set of treating his nearest relatives is "more honored in the breach than in the observance."

Jesus appears to have despised the union of the sexes, therefore marriage, and therefore the home. He taught that in heaven, where all are perfect, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; the saints being like angels, probably of the neuter gender. In Matthew xix. 12 he appears to recommend emasculation, praising those who make themselves "eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." This doctrine is too high for flesh and blood, but Origen and other early Christians practised it literally. We may be sure that those who trample on manhood have no real respect for womanhood. Hence the Romish Church has always praised up virginity, which is simply an abnegation of sex. Cruden shrinks from the literal sense of Christ's words, and says that the "eunuchs" he refers to are those who "upon some religious motive do abstain from marriage and the use of all carnal pleasures; that they may be less encumbered with the cares of the world, and may devote themselves more closely to the service of God." Moonshine! Origen was a better judge than Cruden. If Jesus did not mean what he aid, why did he take the trouble to speak? His doctrine is that of the anchorite. It led naturally to the filthy wretches, called monks, who dreaded the sight of a woman, and hoped to please God by stultifying nature. It also led to the Church law forbidding women to touch the sacrament with their

naked hands, lest they should pollute it. Only women who relish that infamous law can feel any respect for the teaching of Jesus.

PAUL ON WOMEN.

CHRISTIANITY, as the centuries have revealed its practical character, owes more to Paul than to Jesus. Its dogmas are mostly derived from the epistles of the great apostle. Many a true believer thinks he is obeying the carpenter's son, when all the time he is obeying the Tarsus tent-maker. The Christian road to heaven was laid out and paved, not by Jesus himself, but by the gentleman he (or a sunstroke) converted outside Damascus.

Paul was in some respects a better teacher than Jesus. He was more practical, and with all his misty metaphysics he had a firmer hold on the realities of life. But with respect to women, he follows dutifully in his Savior's wake, and elaborates, rather than supplements, the sexual injunctions we have already dealt with. Like his Master, he looks down upon marriage, and is evidently of opinion that if men should not make themselves eunuchs they should live as such. The American Shakers are only carrying out his policy in this respect. If all the world imitated them the human race would soon expire. It would then be impossible to adopt the children of outsiders, families would be gradually extinguished, and the second coming of Christ would be prematurely hastened.

Paul was a bachelor, and a crusty one. According to tradition or calumny, he was jilted by a Jewish woman, and this may account for his peevish attitude towards the sex. In the seventh chapter of the first

of Corinthians he gives vent to a great deal of nasty nonsense. "It is good," he says, "for a man not to touch a woman." If he had meant by this that men were not to thrash their wives we should have thoroughly agreed with him. But what he means is that there should be no sexual intercourse. He was especially severe on young widows who contemplated a second marriage. No doubt if he had seen a young widow whose weeds, as is generally the case, were arranged coquettishly, he would have muttered "Anathema Maranatha." As his own constitution was liable to occasional weaknesses, he might have added, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

A few verses later he expresses himself with greater clearness than Jesus Christ ever attained to: "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn." Paul wished the same end as Jesus. He desired to see every person celibate, but having a little more common sense than Jesus, he saw that such preaching would never be extensively practised (especially by young widows) and he was obliged to make a concession to human frailty. The very fact, however, shows that his view of the question was radically wrong. Marriage is not an excusable weakness, but the normal condition of mankind. Physiologically, mentally, and morally this truth holds good. Even the highest virtues have never sprung from monasteries and convents, but from the rude rough world of toiling and suffering men and women outside.

According to Paul, although marriage was lawful, virginity was a higher state; that is, to be perfect, a woman must stultify her nature and trample upon her maternal instincts. It also implies that she is essentially impure, and that she can only please God by abnegating her sex. This is the deepest disrespect of womanhood, as every healthy wife and mother would admit if such stuff were taught by another than Paul.

The great apostle troubled his poor head about the heads of women. If he lived now when the ladies affect short hair he would go raving mad. It was a subject on which he felt profoundly. To his mind a woman losing her long hair, was like an angel falling from glory. He warns the whole sex against meddling with their tresses. Men, however, are recommended to crop close, long hair being "shameful." We have a shrewd suspicion that Paul was bald. Perhaps if hair restorer had been then invented a successful trial might have considerably changed his views upon this subject.

Man was not created for woman, says Paul, but woman for man. He is of course alluding to the old Rib Story. But a similar observation would have been as sensible about the two halves of a pair of scissors. When they meet what does it matter which was made for the other? Consistently with this view he says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord . . . as the Church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their husbands in everything." Some men have tried this with no great success, and many a man thinks he is having his own way "in everything" when he is sweetly and beautifully led by the nose. Obedience is a hateful word in marriage. Its introduction makes the wife a legalised concubine. Besides, if there *must* be obedience, Paul's rule is ridiculously sweeping, for some women have more sense and judgment than their husbands. Every afflicted woman who applies to the magistrate for relief from the sot who curses her home is flying in the face of Paul. "My dear woman," the magistrate *should* say, "your request is very reasonable, but it is very unorthodox. Go home and read the fifth chapter of Ephesians, where you will see that wives must obey their husbands in *everything*."

Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; Tim. ii. 11, 12) warns women to keep silence in church, for "it is not permitted unto them to speak." Having written this line,

Paul must have got up and strutted round the room like a ruffled cock. "Let the woman," he says, "learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Hear, hear! from the males in the body of the synagogue. Evidently Paul could bray on occasion as lustily as Balaam's ass. If the women "will learn anything," which he clearly thought problematical, "let them ask their husbands at home." Fancy some women with no other sources of information!

The reason Paul gives for woman's inferiority is that Mrs. Eve was first tempted by the serpent. And a capital thing too! If Mrs. Eve had not eaten that apple the human race would still number two, or else, if none of them died, they would be thicker than barrelled herrings.

Our Church of England marriage service follows the teaching of Paul. While the husband promises to love the wife, the wife promises to love, honor and obey the husband. Many ladies say these words at the altar with a mental reservation. When they are obliged to do this they tacitly admit that Paul and the Church are wrong. But if so the Bible is wrong. The fact is that the "blessed book," instead of being woman's best friend, is her worst enemy. The Tenth Commandment makes her domestic property, and Paul winds up by telling her that her sole duty is to play second fiddle in a minor key.

MOTHER'S RELIGION.

Religion is the feminine element in human nature. Science is the masculine. One accepts, the other inquires; one believes, the other proves; one loves the old, the other the new; one submits, the other dares; one is conservative, and the other progressive.

I say this with no disrespect to women. Evolution has made them what they are, and evolution will remake them. Nor do I slight the noble band of advanced women, the vanguard of their sex, who have shed a lustre on our century. I merely take a convenient metaphor, which crystallises a profound truth, though fully conscious of its shortcomings and exclusions.

Woman is still the citadel of religion. Thither the priest flies from the attacks of scepticism. There he finds an inviolable refuge. The mother, the wife, the sister, shield him and his creed; and their white arms and soft eyes are a better guard than all the weapons in the armory of his faith. His are the coward's tactics, but all creatures—even priests—plead the necessity of living, and have the artful instinct of self-preservation.

Religious by inheritance and training, woman rears her children for the Church. Spiritual as well as bodily perils shake her prophetic soul as she peers into the future through the eyes of the child upon her knee. She whispers of God with accents of awe, that fall solemnly on the little one's mind. She trains the knee to bend, the hands to meet in prayer, and the eyes to look upward. She wields the mighty spell of love, and peoples the air of life with phantoms. Infantile logic knows those dear lips cannot lie, and all is truth for all is love. Alas! the lesson has to come that the logic is faulty, that goodness may be leagued

with lies, that a twisted brain may top the sweetest heart.

But long ere the lesson is learnt—if it *is* learnt—the mischief has been wrought. The child has been moulded for the priest, and is duly burnished with catechisms and stamped with dogmas. And how often, when the strong mind grows and bursts its bonds, when the mental eyes wax strong and see the falsehood, the mother's hand, through the child's training, plucks the life back from the fulfilment of its promise. How often, also, when the vigorous manhood has swept aside all illusions, there comes at length the hour of lassitude, and as the mother's voice steals through the caverns of memory the spectres of faith are startled from their repose.

Priests are always warning men against deserting the creed of their mothers. And even a *savant*, like Professor Gazzia, who writes on Giordano Bruno, knows the trick of touching this facile cord of the human heart. Speaking of Bruno's philosophy, he says: "I call it plainly the Negation of God, of that God, I mean, of whom I first heard *at my mother's knee.*"

But Freethinking mothers—and happily there are such—will use their power more wisely; and, above all, will not shrink from their duty. They have the fashioning of the young life—a transcendent privilege, with an awful responsibility. They will see that love nurtures the affections without suborning the intellect; that the young mind is encouraged to think, instead of being stuffed with conclusions; and they will some day find their exceeding rich reward. Their children, trained in the school of self-respect and toleration, will be wiser than the pupils of faith; and the bonds of love will be all the tenderer and stronger for the perception that the free individuality of the child's life was never sacrificed to the parent's authority.

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SATIRES AND PROFANITIES

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SATIRES AND PROFANITIES

_By_

James Thomson

With a Preface by G. W. Foote

London

_1884_

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PREFACE

Believing as I do that James Thomson is, since Shelley, the most brilliant genius who has wielded a pen in the service of Freethought, I take a natural pride and pleasure in rescuing the following articles from burial in the great mausoleum of the periodical press. There will doubtless be a diversity of opinion as to their value. One critic, for instance, has called "The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm" a witless squib; but, on the other hand, the late Professor Clifford considered it a piece of exquisite mordant satire worthy of Swift. Such differences are inevitable from the very nature of the subject. Satire, more than any other form of composition, rouses antipathy where it does not command applause; and the greater the satire, the more intense are the feelings it excites.

But which side, it may be inquired, is likely to be the best judge? Surely the friendly one. Sympathy is requisite to insight, as Carlyle says; while hostility blinds us to a thousand virtues and beauties. I am aware that many will take objection to the employment of satire at all, whether good or bad, on religious topics; but this seems to me preposterous, and I should readily answer it, if Thomson had not done so himself in the most vigorous and triumphant manner.

Nearly all the pieces in this volume appeared originally in the National Reformer or the Secularist. I have attempted no arrangement of them, not even a chronological one; the compositor has shuffled them at his own sweet will. All I have done, besides collecting them and carefully reading the proofs, is to indicate in each case the year of first publication; and I think the reader will approve this plan as both modest and sensible.

I am much mistaken if this volume does not become a well-prized treasure to many Freethinkers; that it will ever be valued by the general public I dare not hope. Yet the number of its admirers will increase with the growth of a healthy scepticism. It will not fall like a bombshell among ordinary readers, who serenely ignore the most terrible mental explosives, and render them comparatively innocuous by mere force of neglect; but it will startle and stimulate some minds, and in time its influence will extend to many more.

What value Thomson placed on these pieces it is difficult to decide. "Working off the talent," he once remarked when I mentioned them. But the fact remains that he allowed one or two of them to be reprinted as pamphlets before any of his poems were collected in a volume. He naturally cared more for his poems than for his prose. What poet ever did the contrary? But even for these he cared little, except "The City of Dreadful Night" and a few others, which expressed his profoundest convictions.

There were several articles in his "Essays and Phantasies" that proved

Thomson to be a born satirist as well as a born poet; notably "Proposals for the Speedy Extinction of Evil and Misery," a tremendous display of sustained irony, to my mind unsurpassed even by Swift at his greatest, and with a poetic grandeur quite beyond him. The contents of this volume show marks of the same strong hand. There is never, perhaps, so continuous an exertion of power; but there is more versatility, more freedom, and often more abandon. I fancy, too, there is more rapidity and suppleness, and I am sure there is more mirth.

Thomson's satire was always bitterest, or at any rate most trenchant, when it dealt with Religion, which he considered a disease of the mind, engendered by folly and fostered by ignorance and vanity. He saw that spiritual superstition not only diverts men from Truth, but induces a slavish stupidity of mind, and prepares the way for every form of political and social injustice. He was an Atheist first and a Republican afterwards. He derided the idea of making a true Republic of a population besotted with religion, paralysed by creeds cringing to the agents of their servitude, and clinging to the chains that enthral them.

A few words only as to Thomson's life. Outwardly it was singularly uneventful, although inwardly it was intense and exciting. He was bom at Port Glasgow, on the 23rd of November, 1834; and he died in London, on the 1st of June 1882. His father was a merchant captain, and his mother a zealous Irvingite. Left parentless in his infancy, he was educated at the Caledonian Orphan Asylum. For some years he served as a schoolmaster in the army, during which time he contracted an intimate friendship with Mr. Bradlaugh, with whom he subsequently worked and lived in London. Soon after leaving Mr. Bradlaugh he devoted himself to journalism, to which he brought a well-practised pen; contributing to the _National Reformer, the Secularist, the Liberal, Cope's Tobacco Plant_, and other periodicals. Shortly before his death he gained access to the _Weekly Dispatch_ and the _Fortnightly Review_. His poems and essays were mostly written before he tried to live by his pen. Four volumes of these have been published by Reeves and Turner, under the generous editorship of Mr. Bertram Dobell, who has prefixed a memoir to the last, entitled "A Voice from the Nile and Other Poems." Besides the five volumes of Thomson's writings now before the public, there are many essays and articles and a few poems still uncollected, some of them of high value; and many poems in manuscript, unknown to all but a few privileged friends. Mr. Dobell hopes to publish them all in time. Thomson's poetical reputation is, however, already established. The best judges give him the highest praise. My own judgment assigns him the next place to Robert Browning. Of course it is no blasphemy to dispute my estimate; but what prospect is there of reversing the common verdict of George Eliot, George Meredith, Swinburne, and Rossetti?

Mr. Dobell refers to the charm of Thomson's manner in social intercourse. His personal appearance told in his favor. He was of the medium height, well-built, and active. He possessed that striking characteristic sometimes found in mixed races--black hair and beard, and grey-blue eyes. The eyes were fine and wonderfully expressive. They were full of shifting light, soft grey in some moods and deep blue in others. They contained depth within depth; and when he was moved by strong passion they widened and flashed with magnetic power. When not suffering from depression he was the life of the company. He was the most brilliant talker I ever met, and at home in all societies; a fine companion in a day's walk, and a shining figure at the festive table or in the social drawing-room. But you enjoyed his conversation most when you sat with him alone, taking occasional draughts of our national beverage, and constantly burning "the divine weed."

Thomson's sympathy with radical and revolutionary causes is not much noticed by Mr. Dobell, but it was very strong. He was secretary for some time to the Polish Committee in London, and his glorious lines on "A

Polish Insurgent" which I for one can never read without tears, proves that he might have written the noble songs that George Eliot hoped he would compose. He sympathised with all self-sacrifice, all lofty aspiration, and in particular with all suffering. This last emotion was often betrayed by a look rather than expressed in words. I vividly remember being with him once on a popular holiday at the Alexandra Palace. We were seated on the grass, watching the shifting groups of happy forms, and exchanging appreciative or satirical remarks. Suddenly I observed my companion's gaze fixed on a youth who limped by with a pleasant smile on his face, but too obviously beyond hope of ever sharing in the full enjoyment of life. Thomson's eyes followed him until he passed out of sight, and the next moment our eyes met. I shall never forget the gentle sadness of that look, its beautiful sympathy that transcended speech, and made all words poor.

Thomson's life was a long tragedy. He inherited from his father a fatal curse, and in his youth he lost the beautiful girl to whom he was engaged. She was the object of his passionate adoration, and allusions to her often occur in his poems. Her image mingled with all the sombre panoramas of Love and Death and Grief that passed before the eyes of his imagination. Yet I do not agree with Mr. Dobell in regarding this bereavement as the _cause_ of his life-long misery. She was, I hold, merely the peg on which he hung his raiment of sorrow; without her, another object might have served the same purpose. He carried within him his proper curse, constitutional melancholia. From long and careful observation I formed this conclusion, and it explains Thomson's life and philosophy. I would not dogmatise, however; for the profundities and subtleties of the human heart baffle all calculation. Certitude is now impossible. The seal of eternal silence is set on Thomson's lips--"after life's fitful fever he sleeps well." He is buried at Highgate, and his darling lies, I suspect, in an unknown grave. Death has at last united them, but their love survives in the glory of immortal song.

THE DEVIL IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(1876.)

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has delivered judgment in the case of Jenkins v. Cook. Many of the highest personages in the realm, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and the great law-lords, were present to give weight and solemnity to the decision, which was read by the Lord Chancellor. It was reported at full length in the _Times_ of the following day, Feb. 17, 1876, the length being two columns of small print.

I must try to indicate briefly the main facts of the case, before hazarding any comments on it. Mr. Jenkins, of Christ Church, Clifton, brought an action against his vicar, the Kev. Flavel S. Cook, for refusing him the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Mr. Cook justified the refusal on the ground that Mr. Jenkins did not believe in the Devil, all passages relating to the Devil and evil spirits having been excluded from a bulky volume published by Mr. Jenkins, entitled "Selections from the Old and New Testaments." By the evidence of Mrs. Jenkins, who attempted an amicable arrangement, it appears that Mr. Cook said to her: "Let Mr. Jenkins write me a calm letter, and say he believes in the Devil, and I will give him the Sacrament." Whereupon Mr. Jenkins wrote on July 20, 1874: "With regard to my book, 'Selections from the Old and New Testaments,' the parts I have omitted, and which has enabled me [meaning, doubtless, and the omission of which has enabled me] to use the book morning and evening in my family are, in their present

generally received sense, quite incompatible with region or decency (in my opinion). How such ideas have become connected with a book containing everything that is necessary for a man to know, I really cannot say; I can only sincerely regret it." Mr. Cook replied in effect: "Then you cannot be received at the Lord's table in my church." Mr. Jenkins, a regular communicant, and admittedly a man of exemplary and devout life, answered: "Thinking as you do, I do not see what other course you could consistently have taken. I shall, nevertheless, come to the Lord's table as usual at 'your' church, which is also mine." Accordingly he presented himself, and was repelled, whereupon he brought an action against Mr. Cook.

The case was first tried in the Court of Arches, and the dean dismissed the suit and condemned Mr. Jenkins in costs, saying, "I am of opinion that the avowed and persistent denial of the existence and personality of the Devil did, according to the law of the Church, as expressed in her canons and rubrics, constitute the promoter [Mr. Jenkins] 'an evil liver,' and 'a depraver of the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments,' in such sense as to warrant the defendant in refusing to administer the Holy Communion to him until he disavowed or withdrew his avowal of the heretical opinion, and that the same consideration applies to the absolute denial by the promoter of the doctrine of the eternity of punishment, and, of course, still more to the denial of all punishment for sin in a future state, which is the legitimate consequence of his deliberate exclusion of the passages of scripture referring to such punishment."

So far, so well; the Church of England was assured of the Devil and the eternal punishment it has always held so dear. But Mr. Jenkins appealed to the highest court, and this has reversed the decision of the lower, admonished Mr. Cook for his conduct in the past, monished him to refrain from the like offence in future, and condemned him in the costs of both suits. Do you think, then, that the Church of England is authoritatively deprived of her dear Devil and her beloved eternal punishment? Not at all; the really important problem is evaded with consummate lawyerlike wariness; the points in dispute are most shiftily shifted like slides of a magic lantern; we have a new decision essentially unrelated to that which it cancels; we have a judgment which concerns not the Devil--except that he would chuckle over the too clever unwisdom which fancies it can extinguish "burning questions" with legal wigs.

Their most learned lordships in the first place observe that the learned judge of the Court of Arches appears to have considered that the canon and the rubric severally warrant the repulsion from the Lord's table of "an evil liver," and "a depraver of the Book of Common Prayer," whereas the terms are "an open and notorious evil liver," and "common and notorious depravers." This is a most pregnant distinction, teaching us that an evil liver and a depraver of the said book, as long as he is not notoriously such, is fully entitled to the Holy Communion, fully entitled to the privilege of "eating and drinking damnation to himself?" a privilege from which the notorious evil liver and depraver is righteously debarred.

Now, their most learned lordships find that there is absolutely no evidence that the appellant was an evil liver, much less an open and notorious evil liver. The Question follows, Was he a common and notorious depraver of the Book of Common Prayer? It was contended that the Selections, coupled with the letter of July 20, proved him to be this. But the letter was not written spontaneously. He was invited by the respondent, Mr. Cook, to write it. It was a friendly and private, as well as a solicited, communication. Therefore, whatever be the construction of the letter, and even if there be in it a depravation of the Book of Common Prayer, still it would be impossible to hold that the writing of such a letter in such circumstances could make the appellant

"a common and notorious depraver." Whence it is clear that a man may deprave the Book of Common Prayer as much as he pleases in private conversation and letters, yet retain the precious privilege of "eating and drinking damnation to himself" in the Holy Communion; he can only forfeit this by common and notorious depravation of that blessed book--for instance, by a depravation repeatedly published in a newspaper, or persistently proclaimed by the town-crier.

So far the law seems most clear, and the judgment quite incontestible. But leaving the strait limits of the law, and looking at the facts in evidence, there is one part of the judgment which to the common lay mind is simply astonishing. Their most learned lordships "_desire to state in the most emphatic manner that there is not before them any evidence that the appellant entertains the doctrines attributed to him by the Dean of Arches_;" wherefore their most learned and subtle lordships "do not mean to decide that those doctrines are otherwise than inconsistent with the formularies of the Church of England." Nor, of course, do they mean to decide that those doctrines _are_ inconsistent with, those formularies. No, "This is not the subject for their lordships' present consideration." Indeed, "If they were [had been] called upon to decide that [whether] those opinions, or any of them, could be entertained or expressed by a member of the Church, whether layman or clergyman, consistently with the law and with his remaining in communion with the Church, they would have looked upon this case with much greater anxiety than they now feel in its decision."

Mr. Jenkins compiles and publishes a book of "Selections from the Bible," carefully excluding all passages relating to the Devil and evil spirits. The book is bulky; and, in fact, though this is not expressly stated, seems to contain pretty well all the Bible except such passages. He further exhibits in the case a book of selections from the liturgy of the Church of England, apparently compiled on the same principle of exclusion.. Mr. Cook sends through Mrs. J. a message: "Let Mr. J. write me a calm letter, and say he believes in the Devil, and I will give him the Sacrament." Mr. J. replies, as we have seen, that the parts he has omitted are, in his opinion, quite incompatible with religion or decency, _in their generally received sense_; such generally received sense being evidently (to all of us save their most learned and subtle lordships) that in which the Church of England receives them. Mr. C. replies, "Then I must refuse you the Communion." Mr. J. answers, "Thinking as you do, I do not see what other course you could con-. sistently have taken;" and resolves to test the question of legality. With these facts staring them in the face, their most learned and most subtle lordships can, with the utmost solemnity, and in the most emphatic manner, declare that there is not any evidence before them that Mr. Jenkins does not believe in the Devil in the common Church of England sense! What the eyes of laymen, however purblind, cannot help seeing clearly, their far-sighted lordships, putting on legal spectacles, dim with the dust of many ages, manage not to discern at all.

The question cannot be left thus undecided. As matters stand, the poor Church does not know whether, legally, it has a Devil or not. Its Devil, its dear and precious old Devil, is in a state of suspended animation, neither dead nor alive; a most inefficient and burdensome Devil. He must either be restored to full health and vigor, or buried away decently for ever; decently and solemnly, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of all their lordships of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, reading the appropriate Church service over his grave. That would be touching and impressive!--"Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God (with the sanction and authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council) of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and

certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ." At present it appears that every clergyman and layman in the Church has the legal right to sing as a solo in private, especially if solicited, Beranger's refrain, "_The Devil is dead! The Devil is dead!_" while it is doubtful whether he is at liberty to chant it publicly and in chorus--a state of things anomalous beyond even the normal anomalism of all things in this our happy England. It is urgent that some one, lay or cleric, should compel the decision which the suit of Mr. Jenkins has failed to obtain.

In considering the question whether disbelief in the Devil would "deprave" the Prayer Book, we must refer to this book itself. It contains three creeds--the Apostles', the Nicene, and that called of Athanasius. Of these the Nicene (the creed in the Communion Service, by the way) mentions neither the Devil nor Hell; the Apostles' and the so-called Athanasian mention hell but not the Devil. In No. III. of the Thirty-nine Articles hell is solidly established, but again there is no mention of the Devil. It may be argued that hell implies the Devil, as a fox-hole implies a fox; but his existence is not authoritatively averred. Strangely enough, the only personage who, according to the creeds and articles, has certainly been in hell, is Jesus Christ himself: "He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven." What took _him_ to hell? The Prayer Book does not inform us. But we learn from the Epistle called 1 Peter, chap. iii., 19, 20, and chap. iv., 6: "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.... For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Whence it appears that the spirits in prison were not the Devil and his angels, but the spirits of those who were drowned in the Flood for disobedience; and it furthermore appears that these spirits were saved by the preaching of Christ; so that in this famous harrying of hell, he seems to have left it as empty as the mosstroopers in their forays left farmsteads. It is true that No. VI. of the Articles settles the canon of the Old and New Testaments, and that anyone daring to exclude from belief anything in this canon might be convicted of depraving the Prayer Book. But in that case all the best scholars and divines of the Church are guilty of this dreadful sin; and not only guilty, but openly, commonly and notoriously guilty: and therefore all merit repulsion from the Lord's table. Let the truly faithful clergy, those who believe all without question or distinction, do their duty to the Articles of religion of their Church (the Creeds, as I have pointed out, are neutral), and they will shut out from their Communion nearly all the intelligent piety and learning which lend it whatever dignity it still retains. Granted the canon in its integrity, and the existence of a personal Devil, and the doctrine of eternal punishment cannot be fairly disputed. Without multiplying texts, I may refer to Revelation, chap. xx., as decisive on these points.

From these considerations it follows that if the Church of England is bound by her own articles she will hold fast to the Devil and hell, and deny the privilege of her Communion to any one who depraves the Prayer-Book by common and notorious disbelief in them. And for my own part, I do not see how the Church could get on at all without a Devil and hell, especially in competition with the other Christian sects, which make unlimited use of both. The Devil is in fact as essential to the Christian schemes as a leader of the opposition to that great political blessing, government by party. If he were to die, or be deposed, it would be necessary to elect another to the vacant dignity. You cannot put the leadership in commission as the unfortunate Liberals were taunted with doing, in their demoralisation after their disasters of the General Election and Mr. Gladstone's sudden retirement. Just as

Mr. Disraeli lamented the withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone, complaining of the embarrassment caused to the Government by having no responsible leader opposed to it, so we can imagine dear God lamenting the absence of a Devil, and declaring that the Christian scheme could not work well without one. His utter loss would make the government of the world retrograde from an admirably balanced constitutional monarchy to a mere Oriental absolute despotism. You must choose some one to lead, if only in name and for the time, as the Whigs chose Lord Hartington. But though Lord Hartington is still tolerated by us English, a Lord Hartington of a Devil, be it said with all respect to both his lordship and his Devil-ship, would scarcely be tolerated by either the celestial or the infernal benches.

In Beranger's authentic record, already alluded to, of "The Death of the Devil"--which, however, relates only to the Church of Rome--we read how, on learning the catastrophe:--

> "The conclave shook with mortal fear;
> Power and cash-box, adieu! they said;
> We have lost our father dear,
> The Devil is dead! the Devil is dead!"

But while they they were in this passion of grief and despair, St. Ignatius offered to take the place of the dead Devil; and none could doubt that he with his Jesuits for imps would prove a most efficient substitute. Wherefore the Church threw off its sorrow and welcomed his offer with most holy rapture:--

> "Noble fellow! cried all the court,
> We bless thee for thy malice and hate.
> And at once his Order, Rome's support,
> Saw its robe flutter Heaven's gate.
> From the angel's tears of pity fell:
> Poor man will have cause to rue, they said;
> St. Ignatius inherits Hell.
> The Devil is dead! the Devil is dead!"

Thus matters continued well for the Church of Rome, and, in fact, became even better than before. But if the Devil should die in the Church of England, whom has she that could efficiently take his place? She has no saints except the disciples and apostles of the New Testament, and these have long since gone to glory. Would Mr. Gladstone undertake the office? or Mr. Beresford Hope, with the _Saturday Review_ for his infernal gazette? or the editor of the _Rock?_ or he of the _Church Times?_ or the man who does religion for the _Daily Telegraph?_ Each of these distinguished gentlemen might well eagerly accept the candidature or a post so lofty: but I fear that none of them could be considered equal to its functions. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli has the requisite genius, and probably he would be very glad to exchange the Premiership of little England for that of large hell: but unfortunately he has already committed himself to the side of the angels, meaning by angels the humdrum Tory angels of heaven--for, as Dr. Johnson said, the Devil was the first Whig. On the whole, the Church of England had better keep loyal to its ancient and venerable Devil, being too impoverished in intellect and character to supply a worthy successor.

I have ventured to compare the government of the world in the Christian scheme, by a God and a Devil, with our own felicitous government by party. There is, however, or rather there appears to be, a striking difference between the two. In our government, when the Prime Minister finds himself decidedly in a minority, he goes out of office, and the Leader of the Opposition goes in; in the Government of the World the Leader of the Opposition seems to have always had an immense majority (and his majority in these days is probably larger than ever before,

seeing that sceptics and infidels have multiplied exceedingly), yet the other side is supposed to retain permanent possession of office. I say "supposed," because the Bible itself suggests that this popular opinion is a mistake, the Devil (if there be a Devil) being entitled by it the prince of this world, which surely implies his accession to power.

Although the Godhead or governing power of the world, according to the Christian scheme, is usually spoken and written of as a trinity, it is, in fact, quarterary or fourfold for Protestants, and quinary or fivefold for Roman Catholics. The former have God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and God the Devil; the latter supplement these with Goddess the Virgin Mary. Both formally acknowledge the first three as collectively and severally almighty, but Protestants implicitly acknowledge the fourth, and Roman Catholics the fifth, as more almighty still (these solecisms of dogma cannot be expressed without solecisms of language). With the Roman Catholics I am not concerned here. With regard to the Protestants, and those especially professing the Protestantism of the Church of England, I may safely affirm that the Devil is not less essential to their theology than is any person of the Trinity, or, in fact, than are the three persons together. Indeed, the Father and the Holy Ghost have been practically dispensed with, leaving Christ and Satan to fight the battle out between themselves.

As this is a gloriously scientific age, nobly enamored of the exact sciences, I will endeavor to expound this sublime subject of the divinity of the Church of England mathematically, even after the manner of the divine Plato in Book VIII. of "The Republic," treating of divine and human generation; and in the "Timæus," treating of the creation of the universal soul. His demonstrations, indeed, are so divinely obscure as to confound all the scholiasts; my demonstration, however, shall be so translucent that even the most learned and subtle lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, with their legal spectacles on, shall not be able to help seeing through it. And whereas the figures, which are shapes, are more intelligible to most people than the figures which are numbers, let the exposition be geometrical. We will say, then, that the Church of old conceived the divinity in the form of an equilateral triangle, whereof the base was Christ as the whole system was founded on belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father and the Holy Ghost were the two sides, leaning each on the other; and the Devil was the apex, as opposed to, and farthest from, our blessed Savior. But in course of time the theologians (perhaps merely wanting some occupation for their vigorous talents, perhaps deeming it undignified to have two persons of the godhead supporting each other obliquely like a couple of tipsy men, perhaps simply in order to make matters square) set to work, and pushed up the two sides, so that each might stand firm and perpendicular by itself. This process had two unforeseen results; it expanded the apex, which was a very elastic point, so that it became the crowning side of the square, and it so unhinged the sides that after a brief upright existence they lost their balance, and were carried to Limbo by the first wind of strange doctrine which blew that way; and the Devil and Christ, or Christ and the Devil (arrange the precedence as you please), were left alone confronting each other. These two are of course equal and parallel, the main distinction between them being that Christ is below, and the Devil above, or, in other words, that the Devil is superior and Christ inferior (the Devil seems entitled to the precedence). Thus matters have continued even to the present time, the divinity showing itself, as we may say, without form and void; and we are free to speculate on the momentous questions: Will the crown (which is the Devil) fall into the base (which is Christ)? Will the base float up into the crown? Will the two coalesce half way? Will they both, unknit from their sides, be carried away to Limbo by some blast of strange doctrine? One thing is certain, they cannot long remain as they are. Rare Ben Jonson chanted the Trinity, or Equilateral Triangle; rare Walt Whitman has chanted the Square Deific (with Satan for the fourth

side); no poet can care to chant the two straight lines which, in the language of Euclid, and in the region of intelligence, cannot enclose a space, but are as a magnified symbol of equal--to nothing.

P. S.--It may be appropriately added that the books of Euclid are really symbolic and prophetic expositions of most sublime and sacrosanct mysteries, though in these days few persons seem aware of the fact. Thus the very first definition, "A point is position without magnitude," exactly defines every point of difference between the theologians. So a line, which is as the prolongation of a point, or length without breadth, represents in one sense (for each symbol has manifold meanings) the history of any theological system. An acute angle is, say, Professor Clifford; an obtuse angle, Mr. Whalley; a right angle, the present writer: _non angeli sed Angli_. The first proposition, "To erect an equilateral triangle upon a given finite straight line," indicates the problem solved by Christianity, when it erected the Trinity on the basis of the man we call Jesus. This pregnant subject should be worked out in detail through the whole eight books.

RELIGION IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Top of Pike's Peak, March 4th, 1873.

Honored with your special commission, I at once hurried across to Denver, and thence still westward until I found myself among the big vertebrae of this longish backbone of America. I have wandered to and fro among the new cities, the advanced camps of civilisation, always carefully reticent as to my mission, always carefully inquiring into the state of religion both in doctrine and practice. You were so hopeful that high Freethought would be found revelling triumphant in these high free regions, that I fear you will be acutely pained by this my true report. Churches and chapels of all kinds abound--Episcopalian, Methodist Episcopal (for the Methodists here have bishops), Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, Roman Catholic, etc. Zeal inflaming my courage, three and even four times have I ventured into a church, each time enduring the whole service; and if I have not ventured oftener, certainly I had more than sufficient cause to abstain. For as I suffered in my few visits to churches in your England, so I suffered here; and such sufferings are too dreadful to be frequently encountered, even by the bravest of the brave. Whether my sensations in church are similar to those of others, or are peculiar to myself, I cannot be sure; but I am quite sure that they are excruciating. On first entering I may feel calm, wakeful, sane, and not uncomfortable, except that here I rather regret being shut in from the pure air and splendid sky, and in England rather regret having come out through the raw, damp murk, and in both regret that civilisation has not yet established smoking-pews; but the Church is always behind the age. It is pleasant for awhile to note the well-dressed people seated or entering; the men with unctuous hair and somewhat wooden decorum; the women floating more at ease, suavely conscious of their fine inward and outward adornments. It is pleasant to keep a hopeful look-out for some one of more than common beauty or grace, and to watch such a one if discovered. As the service begins, and the old, old words and phrases come floating around me, I am lulled into quaint dream-memories of childhood; the long unthought-of school-mates, the surreptitious sweetstuff, the manifold tricks and smothered laughter, by whose aid (together with total inattention to the service, except to mark and learn the text) one managed to survive the ordeal. The singing also is pleasant, and lulls me into vaguer dreams. Gradually, as the service proceeds, I become more drowsy; my small faculties are drugged into quiet slumber, they feel themselves off duty,

there is nothing for which they need keep awake. But, with the commencement of the sermon, new and alarming symptoms arise within me, growing ever worse and worse until the close. Pleasure departs with tranquility, the irritation of revolt and passive helplessness is acute. I cannot find relief in toffy, or in fun with my neighbors, as when I was a happy child. The old stereotyped phrases, the immemorial platitudes, the often-killed sophistries that never die, come buzzing and droning about me like a sluggish swarm of wasps, whose slow deliberate stinging is more hard to bear than the quick keen stinging of anger. Then the wasps, penetrating through my ears, swarm inside me; there is a horrid buzzing in my brain, a portentous humming in my breast; my small faculties are speedily routed, and disperse in blind anguish, the implacable wasps droning out and away after them, and I am left void, void; with hollow skull, empty heart, and a mortal sinking of stomach; my whole being is but a thin shell charged with vacuity and desperate craving; I expect every instant to collapse or explode. It is but too certain that if anyone should then come to lead me off to an asylum for idiots, or a Young Men's Christian Association, or any similar institution, I could not utter a single rational word to save myself. And though all my faculties have left me, I cannot attempt to leave the church; decorum, rigid and frigid, freezes me to my seat; I stare stonily in unimaginable torture, feebly wondering whether the sermon will outlast my sanity, or my sanity outlast the sermon. When at length released, I am so utterly demoralised that I can but smoke furiously, pour much beer and cram much dinner into my hollowness, and so with swinish dozing hope to feel better by tea-time. Now, though in order to fulfil the great duties you entrust to me, I have cheerfully dared the Atlantic, and spent long days and perilous nights in railroad cars, and would of course (were it indeed necessary) face unappalled mere physical death and destruction, I really could not go on risking, with the certainty of ere long losing, my whole small stock of brains; especially as the loss of these would probably rather hinder than further the performance of the said duties. For suppose me reduced to permanent idiocy by church-going, become a mere brazen hollowness with a riotous tongue like Cowper's church-going bell; is it not most likely that I would then turn true believer, renouncing and denouncing your noble commission, even as you would renounce and denounce your imbecile commissioner?

Finding that I could not pursue my inquiries in the churches and chapels, I was much grieved and perplexed, until one of those thoughts occurred to me which are always welcome and persuasive, because in exact agreement with our own desires or necessities. I thought of what I had remarked when visiting your England: how the churches and chapels and lecture-halls, each sect thundering more or less terribly against all the others, made one guess that the people were more disputatious than pious; how one became convinced, in spite of his infidel reluctance, that the people were indeed, as a rule, thoroughly and genuinely religious, by mingling freely with them in their common daily and nightly life. I asked myself, What really proved to me the pervading Christianity of England? the sermons, the tracts, the clerical lectures, the missionary meetings? the cathedrals and other theatres and music-halls crowded with worshippers on Sunday, while the museums and other public-houses were empty and shut? No, scarcely these things; but the grand princeliness of the princes, the true nobleness of the nobles, the lowliness of the bishops, the sanctity of the clergy, the honesty of the merchants, the veracity of the shopkeepers, the sobriety and thrift of the artisans, the independence and intelligence of the rustics; the general faith and hope and love which brightened the sunless days, the general temperance and chastity which made beautiful the sombre nights; the almost universal abhorrence of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; the almost universal devotion to heaven, the spirit, and God.

I thereupon determined to study the religion out here, even as I had

studied it in England, in the ordinary public and private life of the people; and you will doubtless be sorely afflicted to learn that I have found everywhere much the same signs of genuine, practical Christianity as are so common and patent in the old country. The ranchmen have sown the good seed, and shall reap the harvest of heavenly felicity; the stockmen will surely be corraled with the sheep, and not among the goats, at the last day; not to gain the whole world would the storekeepers lose their own souls; the pioneers have found the narrow way which leadeth unto life; the fishermen are true disciples, the trappers catch Satan in his own snares, the hunters are mighty before the Lord; bright are the celestial prospects of the prospectors, ana the miners are all stoping-out that hidden treasure which is richer than silver and much fine gold. As compared with the English, these Western men are perchance inferior in two important points of Christian sentiment: they probably do not fear God, being little given to fear anyone; they certainly do not honor the king, perhaps because they unfortunately have none to honor. On the other hand, as I have been assured by many persons from the States and the old country, they are even superior to the English in one important point of Christian conduct. Christ has promised that in discharging the damned to hell at the day of judgment, he will fling at them this among other reproaches, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in," and this particular rebuke seems to have wrought a peculiarly deep impression in these men, perhaps because they have much more to do with strangers than have people in old settled countries, so much, indeed, that the word "stranger" is continually in their mouths. The result is (as the said persons from England and the States have often solemnly assured me) that any and every stranger arriving in these regions is most thoroughly, most beautifully, most religiously taken in. So that should any of these fine fellows by evil hap be among the accursed multitude whom Christ thus addresses, they will undoubtedly retort in their frank fashion of speech: "Wall, boss, it may be right to give us hell on other counts, but you say you was a stranger and we didn't take you in. What we want to know is, Did you ever come to our parts to trade in mines or stock or sich? If you _didn't_, how the Devil _could_ we take you in? if you _did_, it's a darned lie, and an insult to our understanding to say we _didn't_."

But though the practical life out here is so veritably Christian, you still hope that at any rate the creeds and doctrines are considerably heterodox. I am sincerely sorry to be obliged to destroy this hope. In the ordinary talk of the men continually recur the same or almost the same expressions and implications of orthodox belief, as are so common in your England, and throughout Christendom. Why such formulas are generally used by men only, I have often been puzzled to explain: it may be that the women, who in all lands attend divine service much more than do the men, find ample expression of their faith in the set times and places of public worship and private prayer; while the men, less methodical, and demanding liberal scope, give it robust utterance whenever and wherever they choose. These formulas, as you must have often remarked, are most weighty and energetic; they avouch and avow the supreme personages and mysteries and dogmas of their religion; they are usually but brief ejaculations, in strong contrast to those long prayers of the Pharisees which Jesus laughed to scorn; and they are often so superfluous as regards the mere worldly meaning of the sentences in which they appear, that it is evident they have been interjected simply to satisfy the pious ardor of the speaker, burning to proclaim in season and out of season the cardinal principles of his faith. I say speaker, and not writer, because writing, being comparatively cold and deliberate, seldom flames out in these sharp swift flashes, that leap from living lips touched with coals of fire from the altar.(1)

1. Is it not time that we wrote such words as this damn at full length, as did Emily Brontë, the Titaness, whom Charlotte justly

> indicates in this as in other respects; instead of putting only initial and final letters, with a hypocritical fig-leaf dash in the middle, drawing particular attention to what it affects to conceal? These words are in all men's mouths, and many of them are emphatically the leading words of the Bible.

I am aware that these fervid ejaculations are apt to be regarded by the light-minded as trivial, by the cold-hearted as indecorous, by the sanctimonious as even profane; but to the true philosopher, whether he be religious or not, they are pregnant with grave significance. For do not these irrepressible utterances burst forth from the very depths of the profound heart of the people? Are they not just as spontaneous and universal as is the belief in God itself? Are they not among the most genuine and impassioned words of mankind? Have they not a primordial vigor and vitality? Are they not supremely of that voice of the people which has been well called the voice of God? Thus when your Englishman instead of "Strange!" says "The Devil!" instead of "Wonderful!" cries "Good Heavens!" instead of "How startling!" exclaims "O Christ!" he does more than merely express his emotions, his surprise, his wonder, his amaze; he hallows it to the assertion of his belief in Satan, in the good kingdom of God, in Jesus; and, moreover, by the emotional gradation ranks with perfect accuracy the Devil lowest in the scale, the heavens higher, Christ the loftiest. When another shouts "God damn you!"(1) he not only condemns the evil of the person addressed; he also takes occasion to avow his own strong faith in God and God's judgment of sinners. Similarly "God bless you!" implies that there is a God, and that from him all blessings flow. How vividly does the vulgar hyperbole "Infernally hot," prove the general belief in hell-fire! And the phrase "God knows!" not merely declares that the subject is beyond human knowledge, but also that an all-wise God exists. Here in the West, as before stated, such brief expressions of faith, which are so much more sincere than long formularies repeated by rote in church, are quite as common as in your England. When one has sharply rebuked or punished another, he says "I gave him hell." And that this belief in future punishment pervades all classes is proved by the fact that even a profane editor speaks of it as a matter of course. For the thermometer having been stolen from his sanctum, the said worthy editor announced that the mean cuss who took it might as well bring or send it back (no questions asked) for it could not be of any use to him in the place he was going to, as it only registered up to 212 degrees. The old notion that hell or Hades is located in the middle of the earth (which may have a scientific solution in the Plutonic theory that we dwell on the crust of a baked dumpling full of fusion and confusion) is obviously tallied by the miner's assertion that his vein was true-fissure, reaching from the grass-roots down to hell. The frequent phrase "A God-damned liar," "A God-damned thief," recognise God as the punisher of the wicked. I have heard a man complain of an ungodly headache, implying first, the existence of God, and secondly, the fact that the Godhead does not ache, or in other words is perfect. Countless other phrases of this kind might be alleged, a few of them astonishingly vigorous and racy, for new countries breed lusty new forms of speech; but the few already given suffice for my present purpose. One remarkable comparison, however, I cannot pass over without a word: it is common to say of a man who has too much self-esteem, He thinks himself a little tin Jesus on wheels. It is clear that some profound suggestion, some sacrosanct mystery, must underlie this bold locution; but what I have been hitherto unable to find out. The connexion between Jesus and tin may seem obvious to such as know anything of bishops and pluralists, pious bankers and traders. But what about the wheels? Have they any relation to the opening chapter of Ezekiel? It is much to be wished that Max Müller, and all other such great scholars, who (as I am informed, for it's not I that would presume to study them myself) manage to extract whatever noble mythological meanings they want, from unintelligible Oriental metaphors and broken phrases many thousand years old, would give a few years of their

superfluous time to the interpretation of this holy riddle. Do not, gentleman, do not by all that is mysterious, leave it to the scholars of millenniums to come; proceed to probe and analyse and turn it inside out at once, while it is still young and flourishing, while the genius who invented it is still probably alive, if he deceased not in his boots, as decease so many gallant pioneers.

And here, before afflicting you further, O much-enduring editor, let me soothe you a little by stating that some particles of heresy, some few heretics, are to be found even here. I have learned that into a very good and respectable bookstore in a city of these regions, certain copies of Taylor's "Diegesis" have penetrated, who can say how? and that some of these have been sold. A living judge has been heard to declare that he couldn't believe at all in the Holy Ghost outfit. It has also been told me of a man who must have held strange opinions as to the offspring of God the Father, though certainly this man was not a representative pioneer, being but a German miner, fresh from the States. This Dutchman (all Germans here are Dutch, doubtless from _Deutsche_, the special claims of the Hollanders being ignored) was asked solemnly by a clergyman, "Who died to save sinners?" and answered "Gott." "What," said the pained and pious pastor, "don't you know that it was Jesus the _Son_ of God?" "Ah," returned placidly the Dutchman, "it vass one of te boys, vass it? I always dought it vass te olt man himselben." This good German may have been misled by the mention of the sons of God early in Genesis, yet it is strange that he knew not that Jesus is the only son of God, and our savior. A story is moreover told of two persons, of whom the one boasted rather too often that he was a self-made man, and the other at length quietly remarked that he was quite glad to hear it, as it cleared God from the responsibility of a darned mean bit of work. Whence some have inferred the heresy that God is the creator of only a part of the universe; but I frankly confess that in my own opinion the reply was merely a playful sarcasm.

The most decided heresy which has come under my own observation was developed in the course of a chat between two miners in a lager-beer saloon and billiard-hall; into the which, it need scarcely be remarked, I was myself solely driven by the fierce determination to carry out my inquiries thoroughly. Bill was smoking, Dick was chewing; and they stood up together, at rather rapidly decreasing intervals, for drinks of such "fine old Bourbon" rye whiskey as bears the honorable popular title of rot-gut. The frequency with which the drinking of alcoholic liquors leads to impassioned and elevated discussion of great problems in politics, history, dog-breeding, horse-racing, moral philosophy, religion, and kindred important subjects, seems to furnish a strong and hitherto neglected argument against tee-totalism. There are countless men who can only be stimulated to a lively and outspoken interest in intellectual questions by a series of convivial glasses and meditative whiffs. If such men really take any interest in such questions at other times, it remains deplorably latent, not exercising its legitimate influence on the public opinion of the world. Our two boys were discussing theology; and having had many drinks, grappled with the doctrine of the triune God. "Wall," said Bill, "I can't make out that trinity consam, that three's one and one's three outfit." Whereto Dick: "Is that so? Then you wam't rigged out for a philosopher, Bill. Look here," pulling forth his revolver, an action which caused a slight stir in the saloon, till the other boys saw that he didn't mean business; "look here, I'll soon fix it up for you. Here's six chambers, but it's only one pistol, with one heft and one barrel; the heft for us to catch hold of, the barrel to kill our enemy. Wall, God a'mighty's jest made hisself a three-shooter, while he remains one God; but the Devil, he's only a single-shot deringer: so God can have three fires at the Devil for one the Devil can have at him. Now can't you figure it out?" "Wall," said Bill, evidently staggered by the revolver, and feeling, if possible, increased respect for that instrument on finding it could be

brought to bear toward settlement of even such a difficulty as the present; "Wall, that pans out better than I thought it could: but to come down to the bedrock, either God's a poor mean shot or his piece carries darned light; for I reckon the Devil makes better play with his one chamber than God with his three." "Maybe," replied Dick, with calm candor, strangely indifferent to the appalling prospects this theory held out for our universe; "some of them pesky little things jest shoot peas that rile the other fellow without much hurting him, and then, by thunder, he lets daylight through you with one good ball. Besides, it's likely enough the Devil's the best shot, for he's been consarned in a devilish heap of shooting more than God has; at any rate"--perchance vaguely remembering to have heard of such things as "religious wars"--"of late years, between here and 'Frisco. Wall, I guess I don't run the creation. Let's liquor;" manifestly deriving much comfort from the consciousness that he had no hand in conducting this world. Bill acquiesced with a brief "Ja," and they stood up for another drink. I am bound to attest that, in spite or because of the drinks, they had argued throughout with the utmost deliberation and gravity, with a dignified demeanour which Bishops and D.Ds. might envy, and ought to emulate.

Having thus comforted you with what little of heresy and infidelity I have been able to gather, it is now my painful duty to advance another class of proofs of the general religiousness here; a class of which you have very few current specimens in England, unless it be among the Roman Catholics. All comparative mythologists--indeed, all students of history--are said to agree that the popular legends and myths of any race at any time are of the utmost value, as showing what the race then believed, and thus determining its moral and intellectual condition at that period; this value being quite irrespective of the truth or untruth to fact of the said legends. Hence in modern times collections of old traditions and fairy tales have been excellently well received, whether from the infantile literature of ancient peoples, as the Oriental and Norse, or from the senile and anile lips of secluded members of tribes whose nationality is fast dying out, as the Gaelic and Welsh. And truly such collections commend themselves alike to the grave and the frivolous for the scientific scholar finds in them rich materials for serious study, and the mere novel-reader can flatter himself that he is studying while simply enjoying strange stories become new by extreme old age. All primitive peoples, who read and write little, have their most popular beliefs fluidly embodied in oral legends and myths; and in this respect the settlers of a new region, though they may come from the oldest countries, resemble the primitive peoples. They are too busy with the tough work of subduing the earth to give much time to writing or reading anything beyond their local newspapers; they love to chat together when not working, and chat, much more than writing, runs into stories. Thus religious legends in great numbers circulate out here, all charged and surcharged with faith in the mythology of the Bible. Of these it has been my sad privilege to listen to not a few. As this letter is already too long for your paper, though very brief for the importance of its theme, I will subjoin but a couple of them, which I doubt not will be quite enough to indicate what measureless superstition prevails in these youngest territories of the free and enlightened Republic.

It is told--on what authority no one asks, the legend being universally accepted on its intrinsic merits, as Protestants would have us accept the Bible, and Papists their copious hagiology--that St. Joseph, the putative father of our Lord, fell into bad habits, slipping almost daily out of Heaven into evil society, coming home very late at night and always more or less intoxicated. It is suggested that he may have been driven into these courses by unhappiness in his connubial and parental relations, his wife and her child being ranked so much above himself by the Christian world, and the latter being quite openly attributed to another father. Peter, though very irascible, put up with his misconduct for a long time, not liking to be harsh to one of the Royal Family; and

it is believed that God the Father sympathised with this poor old Joseph, and protected him, being himself jealous of the vastly superior popularity of Mary and Jesus. But at length, after catching a violent cold through getting out of bed at a preposterous hour to let the staggering Joseph in, Peter told him roundly that if he didn't come home sober and in good time, he must just stay out all night. Joseph, feeling sick and having lost his pile, promised amendment, and for a time kept his word. Then he relapsed; the heavenly life proved too slow for him, the continual howling of "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse" shattered his nerves, he was disgusted at his own insignificance, the memory of the _liaison_ between his betrothed and the Holy Ghost filled him with gall and wormwood, and perhaps he suspected that it was still kept up. So, late one night or early one morning Peter was roused from sleep by an irregular knocking and fumbling at the gate, as if some stupid dumb animal were seeking admittance. "Who's there?" growled Peter. "It's me--Joseph," hiccoughed the unfortunate. "You're drunk," said Peter, savagely.

"You're on the tear again; you're having another bender." "Yes," answered Joseph, meekly. "Wall," said Peter, "you jest go back to where you come from, and spend the night there; get." "I can't," said Joseph. "They're all shut up; they've turned me out." "Then sleep outside in the open air; it's wholesome, and will bring you round," said Peter. After much vain coaxing and supplicating, old Joe got quite mad, and roared out, "If you don't get up and let me in at once, by God I'll take my son out of the outfit and bust up the whole consarn!" Peter, terrified by this threat, which, if carried out, would ruin his prospects in eternal life by abolishing his office of celestial porter, caved in, getting up and admitting Joseph, who ever since has had a latch-key that he may go and come when he pleases. It is to be hoped that he will never when tight let this latch-key be stolen by one of the little devils who are always lurking about the haunts of dissipation he frequents; for in that case the consequences might be awful, as can be readily imagined.

Again it is told that a certain miner, a tough cuss, who could whip his weight in wild cats and give points to a grizzle, seemed uncommonly moody and low-spirited one morning, and on being questioned by his chum, at length confessed that he was bothered by a very queer dream. "I dreamt that I was dead," he explained; "and a smart spry pretty little angel took me up to heaven." "Dreams go by contraries," suggested the chum, by way of comfort. "Let that slide," answered the dreamer; "the point isn't there. Wall, St. Peter wasn't at the gate, and the angel critter led me on to pay my respects to the boss, and after travelling considerable we found him as thus. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost and Peter, all as large as life, were playing a high-toned game of poker, and there was four heavy piles on the table--gold, not shinplasters, you bet. I was kinder glad to see that they played poker up in heaven, so as to make life there not on-bearable; for it would be but poor fun singing psalms all day; I was never much of a hand at singing, more particularly when the songs is psalms. Wall, we waited, not liking to disturb their game, and I watched the play. I soon found that Jesus Christ was going through the rest, cheating worse than the heathen Chinee at euchre; but of course I didn't say nothing, not being in the game. After a while Peter showed that he began to guess it too, if he wasn't quite sure; or p'r'aps he was skeared at up and telling Christ to his face. At last, however, what does Christ do, after a bully bluff which ran Pete almost to his bottom dollar, but up and show five aces to Pete's call; and 'What's that for high?' says he, quite cool. 'Now look you, Christ,' shouts Pete, jumping up as mad as thunder, and not caring a cent or a continental what he said to anybody; 'look you, Christ, that's too thin; we don't want any of your darned miracles here!' and with that he grabbed up his pile and all his stakes, and went off in a mighty huff. Christ looked pretty mean, I tell you, and the game was up. Now you see," said the dreamer, sadly and thoughtfully,

"it's a hard rock to drill and darned poor pay at that, if when you have a quiet hand at poker up there, the bosses are allowed to cheat and a man can't use his deringer or put a head on 'em; I don't know but I'd rather go to the other place on those terms." Not yet to be read in books, as I have intimated, but circulating orally, and in versions that vary with the various rhapsodists, such are the legends you may hear when a ring is formed round the hotel-office stove at night, in shanties and shebangs of ranchmen and miners, in the shingled offices of judge and doctor, in railroad cars and steamboats, or when bumming around the stores; whenever and wherever, in short, men are gathered with nothing particular to do. The very _naïveté_ of such stories surely testifies to the child-like sincerity of the faith they express and nourish. It is the simple unbounded faith of the Middle Ages, such as we find in the old European legends and poems and mysteries, such as your poetess Mrs. Browning well marks in Chaucer.

Many of the so-called liberal clergy complain of the gulf which yawns in this age of materialistic science between religion and every-day life, in this world and the things are treated as mere thin abstractions, they say; and only the lower things are recognised as real. These pious pioneers, in the freshness and wonderfulness of their new life, overleap this gulf without an effort, realising heaven as thoroughly as earth. How could the communion and the human nature of saints be better exhibited than in St. Joseph falling into dissipation and St. Peter playing poker? How could the manhood as well as the Godhead of Jesus Christ be more familiarly brought home to us than by his taking a hand at this game and then miraculously cheating When generations have passed away, if not earlier, such next, heaven

"the infantine Familiar clasp of things divine."

The higher legends as these will assuredly be gathered by earnest and reverent students as quite invaluable historical relics. They must fill the Christian soul with delight; they must harrow the heart of him who hath said in his heart, There is no God.

In conclusion, I must again express my deep regret at being forced by the spirit of truth to give you so favorable an account of the state of religion out here, both in creed and practice. I trust that you will lose no time and spare no exertion in attacking and, if possible, routing out the Christianity now entrenched in these great natural fortresses. Be your war-cry that of the first pioneers, "Pike's Peak or bust"; and be not like unto him found teamless half-way across the plains, with the confession on his waggon-tilt, "Busted, by thunder." For you can come right out here by railroad now. As for myself, I climbed wearily and with mortal pantings unto the top of this great mountain, thinking it one of the best coigns of vantage whence to command a comprehensive view of the sphere of my inquiries, and also a spot where one might write without being interrupted or overlooked by loafers. Unfortunately I have not been able to discover any special religious or irreligious phænomena; for, though the prospect is indeed ample where not intercepted by clouds or mist, very few of the people and still fewer of their characteristics can be made out distinctly even with a good glass. How I am to get down and post this letter puzzles me. The descent will be difficult, dangerous, perhaps deadly. Would that I had not come up. After all there is some truth in the Gospel narrative of the Temptation: for by studying the general course of ecclesiastical promotion and the characters of the most eminent churchmen, I was long since led to recognise that it is indeed Satan who sets people on pinnacles of the temple; and I am now moreover thoroughly convinced that it is the Devil and the Devil only that takes any one to the top of an exceeding high mountain.

THE STORY OF A FAMOUS OLD JEWISH FIRM

(1866.)

Many thousand years ago, when the Jews first started in business, the chief of their merchants was a venerable and irascible old gentleman named Jah. The Jews have always been excellent traders, keen to scent wealth, subtle to track it, unweary to pursue it, strong to seize it, tenacious to hold it; and the most keen, subtle, untiring, strong, tenacious of them all, was this Jah. The patriarchs of his people paid him full measure of the homage which Jews have always eagerly paid to wealth and power, and all their most important transactions were carried out through him. In those antique times people lived to a very great age, and Jah is supposed to have lived so many thousands of years that one may as well not try to count them. Perhaps it was not one Jah that existed all this while, but the house of Jah: the family, both for pride and profit, preserving through successive generations the name of its founder. Certain books have been treasured by the Jews as containing exact records of the dealings of this lordly merchant (or house) both with the Jews themselves and with strangers. Many people in our times, however, have ventured to doubt the accuracy of these records, arguing that some of the transactions therein recorded it would have been impossible to transact, that others must have totally ruined the richest of merchants, that the accounts often contradict each other, and that the system of book-keeping generally is quite unworthy of a dealer so truthful and clear-headed as Jah is affirmed to have been. The records are so ancient in themselves, and they treat of matters so much more ancient still, that it is not easy to find other records of any sort with which to check their accounts. Strangely enough the most recent researches have impugned the accuracy of the most ancient of these records; certain leaves of a volume called the "Great Stone Book," having been brought forward to contradict the very first folio of the ledger in which the dealings of Jah have been posted up according to the Jews. It may be that the first few folios, like the early pages of most annals, are somewhat mythical; and the present humble compiler (who is not deep in the affairs of the primaeval world, and who, like the late lamented Captain Cuttle with his large volume, is utterly knocked up at any time by four or five lines of the "Great Stone Book") will prudently not begin at the beginning, but skip it with great comfort and pleasure, especially as many and learned men are now earnest students of this beginning. We will, therefore, if you please, take for granted the facts that at some time, in some manner, Jah created his wonderful business, and that early in his career he met with a great misfortune, being compelled, by the villainy of all those with whom he had dealings to resort to a wholesale liquidation, which left him so poor, that for some time he had not a house in the world, and his establishment was reduced to four male and as many female servants.

He must have pretty well recovered from this severe shock when he entered into the famous covenant or contract with Abraham and his heirs, by which he bound himself to deliver over to them at a certain, then distant, period, the whole of the valuable landed property called Canaan, on condition that they should appoint him the sole agent for the management of their affairs. In pursuance of this contract, he conducted that little business of the flocks and herds for Jacob against one Laban; and afterwards, when the children of Abraham were grown very numerous, he managed for them that other little affair, by which they spoiled the Egyptians of jewels of silver and jewels of gold; and it is even asserted that he fed and clothed the family for no less than forty years in a country where the commissariat was a service of extreme difficulty.

At length the time came when he was to make over to them the Land of Canaan, for this purpose evicting the several families then in possession thereof. The whole of the covenanted estate he never did make over to them, but the Jews freely admit that this was through their own fault. They held this land as mortgaged to him, he pledging himself not to foreclose while they dealt with him faithfully and fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant. They were to pay him ten per cent, per annum interest, with sundry other charges, to put all their affairs into his hands, to have no dealings whatsoever with any rival merchants, etc., etc. Under this covenant the Jews continued in possession of the fine little property of Canaan for several hundred years, and they assert that this same Jah lived and conducted his business throughout the whole period. But, as I have ventured to suggest, the long existence of the house of Jah may have been the sum total of the lives of a series of individual Jahs. The Jews could not have distinguished the one from the other; for it is a strange fact that Jah himself, they admit, was never seen. Perhaps he did not affect close contact with Jews. Perhaps he calculated that his power over them would be increased by mystery; this is certain, that he kept himself wholly apart from them in his private office, so that no one was admitted even on business. It is indeed related that one Moses (the witness to the execution of the covenant) caught a glimpse of him from behind, but this glimpse could scarcely have sufficed for identification; and it is said, also, that at certain periods the chief of the priesthood was admitted to consultation with him; but although his voice was then heard, he did not appear in person--only the shadow of him was seen, and everyone will allow that a shadow is not the best means of identification. And in further support of my humble suggestion it may be noted that in many and important respects the later proceedings attributed to Jah differ extremely in character from the earlier; and this difference cannot be explained as the common difference between the youth and maturity and senility of one and the same man, for we are expressly assured that Jah was without change--by which we are not to understand that either through thoughtlessness or parsimony he never had small cash in his pocket for the minor occasions of life; but that he was stubborn in his will, unalterable in his ideas, persistent in his projects and plans.

The records of his dealings at home with the Jews, and abroad with the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Philistines, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Edomites, and other nations, as kept by the Jews themselves, are among the strangest accounts of a large general business which have ever been put down in black on white. And in nothing are they more strange than in the unsullied candor with which the Jews always admit and proclaim that it was their fault, and by no means the fault of Jah, whenever the joint business went badly, and narrate against themselves the most astonishing series of frauds and falsehoods, showing how they broke the covenant, and attempted to cheat the other party in every imaginable way, and, in order to ruin his credit, conspired with foreign adventurers of the worst character--such as MM. Baal, Ashtaroth, and Moloch. Jah, who gave many proofs of a violent and jealous temper, and who was wont to sell up other debtors in the most heartless way, appears to have been very patient and lenient with these flagitious Jews. Yet with all his kindness and long-suffering he was again and again forced to put executions into their houses, and throw themselves into prison; and at length, before our year One, having, as it would seem, given up all hope of making them deal honestly with him, he had put certain strict Romans in possession of the property to enforce his mortgage and other rights.

And now comes a sudden and wonderful change in the history of this mysterious Jah. Whether it was the original Jah, who felt himself too old to conduct the immense business alone, or whether it was some successor of his, who had not the same self-reliance and imperious will,

one cannot venture to decide; but we all know that it was publicly announced, and soon came to be extensively believed, that Jah had taken unto himself two partners, and that the business was thenceforth to be carried on by a firm, under the style of Father, Son, and Co. It is commonly thought that history has more of certainty as it becomes more recent; but unfortunately in the life of Jah, uncertainty grows ten times more uncertain when we attain the period of this alleged partnership, for the Jews deny it altogether; and of those who believe in it not one is able to define its character, or even to state its possibility in intelligible language. The Jews assert roundly that the alleged partners are a couple of vile impostors, that Jah still conducts his world-wide business alone, that he has good reasons (known only to himself) for delaying the exposure of these pretenders; and that, however sternly he has been dealing with the Jews for a long time past, and however little they may seem to have improved so as to deserve better treatment, he will yet be reconciled to them, and restore them to possession of their old land, and exalt them above all their rivals and enemies, and of his own free will and absolute pleasure burn and destroy every bond of their indebtedness now in his hands. And in support of these modest expectations they can produce a bundle of documents which they assert to be his promissory notes, undoubtedly for very large amounts; but which, being carefully examined, turn out to be all framed on this model: "I, the above-mentioned A. B." (an obscure or utterly unknown Jew, supposed to have lived about three thousand years ago), "hereby promise in the name of Jah, that the said Jah shall in some future year unknown, pay unto the house of Israel the following amount, that is to say, etc." If we ask, Where is the power of attorney authorising this dubious A. B. to promise this amount in the name of Jah? the Jews retort: "If you believe in the partnership, you must believe in such power, for you have accepted all the obligations of the old house, and have never refused to discount its paper: if you believe neither in Jah nor in the partnership, you are a wretch utterly without faith, a commercial outlaw." In addition, however, to these remarkable promissory notes, the Jews rely upon the fact that Jah, in the midst of his terrible anger, has still preserved some kindness for them. He threatened many pains and penalties upon them for breach of the covenant, and many of these threats he has carried out; but the most cruel and horrific of all he has not had the heart to fulfil: they have been oppressed and crushed, strangers have come into their landed property, they have been scattered among all peoples, a proverb and a by-word of scorn among the nations, their religion has been accursed, their holy places are defiled, but the crowning woe has been spared them (Deut. xxviii., 44); never yet has it come to pass that the stranger should lend to them, and they should not lend to the stranger. There is yet balm in Gilead, a rose of beauty in Sharon, and a cedar of majesty on Lebanon; the Jew still lends to the stranger, and does not borrow from him, except as he "borrowed" from the Egygtian--and the interest on money lent is still capable, with judicious treatment, of surpassing the noble standard of "shent per shent."

And even among the Gentiles there are some who believe that Jah is still the sole head of the house, and that the pair who are commonly accounted junior partners are in fact only superior servants, the one a sort of manager, the other general superintendent and agent, though Jah may allow them a liberal commission on the profits, as well as a fixed salary.

--But the commercial world of Europe, in general, professes to believe that there is a _bona fide_ partnership, and that the three partners have exactly equal authority and interest in the concern; that, in fact, there is such thorough identity in every respect that the three may, and ought to be, for all purposes of business, considered as one. The second partner, they say, is really the son of Jah; though Jah, with that eccentricity which has ever abundantly characterised his proceedings,

had this son brought up as a poor Jewish youth, apparently the child of a carpenter called Joseph, and his wife Mary. Joseph has little or no influence with the firm, and we scarcely hear of a transaction done through him, but Mary has made the most profitable use of her old _liaison_ with Jah, and the majority of those who do business with the firm seek her good offices, and pay her very liberal commissions. Those who do not think so highly of her influence, deal with the house chiefly through the son, and thus it has come to pass that poor Jah is virtually ousted from his own business. He and the third partner are little more than sleeping partners, while his mistress and her son manage every affair of importance.

This state of things seems somewhat unfair to Jah; yet one must own that there are good reasons for it. Jah was a most haughty and humorous gentleman, extremely difficult to deal with, liable to sudden fits of rage, wherein he maltreated friends and foes alike, implacable when once offended, a desperately sharp shaver in the bargain, a terrible fellow for going to law. The son was a much more kindly personage, very affable and pleasant in conversation, willing and eager to do a favor to any one, liberal in promises even beyond his powers of performance, fond of strangers, and good to the poor; and his mother, with or without reason, is credited with a similar character. Moreover, Jah always kept himself invisible, while the son and mother were possibly seen, during some years, by a large number of persons; and among those who have never seen them their portraits are almost as popular as photographs of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

With the real or pretended establishment of the Firm, a great change took place in the business of Jah. This business had been chiefly with the Jews, and even when it extended to foreign transactions, these were all subordinate to the Jewish trade. But the Firm lost no time in proclaiming that it would deal with the whole world on equal terms: no wonder the Jews abhor the alleged partners! And the nature of the contracts, the principal articles of trade, the mode of keeping the accounts, the commission and interest charged and allowed, the salaries of the agents and clerks, the advantages offered to clients, were all changed too. The head establishment was removed from Jerusalem to Rome, and branch establishments were gradually opened in nearly all the towns and villages of Europe, besides many in Asia and Africa, and afterwards in America and Australia. It is worth noting that in Asia and Africa (although the firm arose in the former) the business has never been carried on very successfully; Messrs. Brahma, Vishnu, Seeva, and Co., the great houses of Buddha and Mumbo Jumbo, various Parsee firms, and other opposition houses, having among them almost monopolised the trade.

The novel, distinctive, and most useful article which the Firm engaged to supply was a bread called _par excellence_ the Bread of Life. The Prospectus (which was first drafted, apparently in perfect good faith, by the Son; but which has since been so altered and expanded by successive agents that we cannot learn what the original, no longer extant, exactly stated) sets forth that the House of Jah, Son and Co. has sole possession of the districts yielding the corn whereof this bread is made, the sole patents of the mills for grinding and ovens for baking, and that it alone has the secret of the proper process for kneading. The Firm admits that many other houses have pretended to supply this invaluable bread, but accuses them all of imposture or poisonous adulteration. For itself, it commands the genuine supply in such quantities that it can under take to feed the whole world, and at so cheap a rate that the poorest will be able to purchase as much as he needs; and, moreover, as the firm differs essentially from all other firms in having no object in view save the benefit of its customers, the partners being already so rich that no profits could add to their wealth, it will supply the bread for mere love to those who have not money!

This fair and beautiful prospectus, you will easily believe, brought vast multitudes eager to deal with the firm, and especially large multitudes of the poor, ravished with the announcement that love should be henceforth current coin of the realm; and the business spread amazingly. But at the very outset a sad mischance occurred. The Son, by far the best of the partners, was suddenly seized and murdered and buried by certain agents of the old Jewish business (furious at the prospect of losing all their rich trade), with the connivance of the Roman installed as inspector. At least, these wretches thought they had murdered the poor man, and it is admitted on every side that they buried him: but the dependants of the Firm have a strange story that he was not really killed, but arose out of his tomb after lying there for three days, and slipped away to keep company with his father, the invisible Jah, in his exceedingly private office; and they assert that he is still alive along with Jah, mollifying the old man when he gets into one of his furious passions, pleading for insolvent debtors, and in all things by act and counsel doing good for all the clients of the house. They, moreover, assert that the third partner, who as the consoling substitute for the absent Son is commonly called the Comforter, and who is very energetic, though mysteriously invisible in his operations, superintends all the details of the business in every one of the establishments. But this third partner is so difficult to catch, that, as stated before, the majority of the customers deal with the venerable mother, as the most accessible and humane personage belonging to the house.

Despite the death or disappearance of the Son, the firm prospered for a considerable time. After severe competition, in which neither side showed itself very scrupulous, the great firm of Jupiter and Co., the old Greek house, which had been strengthened by the amalgamation of the wealthiest Roman firms, was utterly beaten from the field, sold up and extinguished. In the sale of the effects many of the properties in most demand were bought in by the new firm, which also took many of the clerks and agents into its employment, and it is even said adopted in several important respects the mode of carrying on business and the system of book-keeping. But while the firm was thus conquering its most formidable competitor, innumerable dissensions were arising between its own branch establishments; every one accusing every other of dealing on principles quite hostile to the regulations instituted by the head of the house, of falsifying the accounts, and of selling an article which was anything but the genuine unadulterated bread. There were also interminable quarrels among them as to relative rank and importance.

And whether the wheat, as delivered to the various establishments, was or was not the genuine article which the firm had contracted to supply, it was soon discovered that it issued from the licensed shops adulterated in the most audacious manner. And, although the prospectus had stated most positively that the bread should be delivered to the poor customers of the firm without money and without price (and such seems really to have been the good Son's intention), it was found, in fact, that the loaves, when they reached the consumer, were at least as costly as ever loaves of any kind of bread had been. It mattered little that the wheat was not reckoned in the price, when agents', commissioners', messengers' fees, bakers' charges, and a hundred items, made the price total so enormous. When, at length, the business was flourishing all over Europe, it was the most bewildering confusion of contradictions that, perhaps, was ever known in the commercial world. For in all the establishments the agents professed and very solemnly swore that they dealt on principles opposed and infinitely superior to the old principles of trade; yet their proceedings (save that they christened old things with new names) were identical with those which had brought to shameful ruin the most villainous old firms. The sub-managers, who were specially ordered to remain poor while in the business, and for obedience were promised the most splendid pensions

when superannuated, all became rich as princes by their exactions from the clients of the house; the agents, who were especially commanded to keep the peace, were ever stirring up quarrels and fighting ferociously, not only with opposition agents but with one another. The accounts, which were to be regulated by the most honest and simple rules, were complicated in a lawless system, which no man could understand, and falsified to incredible amounts, to the loss of the customers, without being to the gain of the firm. In brief, each establishment was like one of those Chinese shops where the most beautiful and noble maxims of justice and generosity are painted in gilt letters outside, while the most unblushing fraud and extortion are practised inside. When poor customers complained of these things, they were told that the system was perfect, that the evils were all from the evil men who conducted the business! but the good people did not further explain how the perfection of the system could ever be realised, since it must always be worked by imperfect men. Complainants thus mildly and vaguely answered were very fortunate; others, in places where the firm was very powerful, were answered by imprisonment or false accusations, or by being pelted and even murdered by mobs. Many who thought the bread badly baked were themselves thrust into the fire.

Yet so intense is the need of poor men for some bread of life, so willing are simple men to believe fair promises, that, in spite of the monstrous injustice and falsehood and cruelty and licentiousness of the managers and submanagers and agents of the firm, the business continued to flourish, and all the wealth of Europe flowed into its coffers. And generations passed ere some persons bethought them to think seriously of the original Deed of Partnership and the fundamental principles of the Firm. These documents, which had been carefully confined in certain old dead languages which few of the customers could read, were translated into vulgar tongues, which all could read or understand when read, and everyone began studying them for himself. This thinking of essentials, which is so rare a thought among mankind, has already produced remarkable effects, ana promises to produce effects yet more remarkable in a short time.

Behold a few of the questions which this study of the first documents has raised.--The Father, whom no one has seen, is there indeed such a personage? The Son, whom certainly no one has seen for eighteen hundred years, did he really come to life again after being brutally murdered? The junior partner, whom no one has ever seen, the Comforter, is he a comforter made of the wool of a sheep that never was fleeced? The business, as we see it, merely uses the names, and would be precisely the same business if these names covered no personages. Do the managers and submanagers really carry it on for their own profit, using these high names to give dignity to their rascality, and to make poor people believe that they have unbounded capital at their back? One is punished for defamation of character if he denies the existence of the partners, yet not the very chief of all the managers pretends to have seen any of the three!

And the vaunted Bread of Life, wherein does it differ from the old corn-of-Ceres bread, from the baking of the wheat of Mother Hertha? Chiefly in this, that it creates much more wind on the stomach. It is not more wholesome, nor more nourishing, and certainly not more cheap: and it does us little good to be told that it would be if the accredited agents were honest and supplied it pure, when we are told, at the same time, that we must get it through these agents. It is indeed affirmed that, in an utterly unknown region beyond the Black Sea, the genuine wheat may be seen growing by any one who discovers the place; but, as no one who ever crossed the sea on a voyage of discovery ever returned, the assertion rests on the bare word of people who have never seen the corn-land any more than they have seen the partners of the firm; and their word is bare indeed, for it has been stripped to shame in a

thousand affairs wherein it could be brought to the test. They tell us also that we shall all in time cross the Black Sea, and if we have been good customers shall dwell evermore in that delightful land, with unlimited supplies of the bread gratis. This may be true, but how do they know? It may be true that in the sea we shall all get drowned for ever.

These and similar doubts which, in many minds, have hardened into positive disbelief, are beginning to affect seriously the trade of the firm. But its interests are now so inextricably bound up with the interests of thousands and millions of well-to-do and respectable people, and on its solvency or apparent solvency depends that of so large a number of esteemed merchants, that we may expect the most desperate struggles to postpone its final bankruptcy. In the great Roman establishment the manager has been supported for many years by charitable contributions from every one whom he could persuade to give or lend, and now he wants to borrow much more. The superintendent of the shops in London is in these days begging for ten hundred thousand pounds to assist the poor firm in its difficulties.

It seems a good sum of money; but, bless you, it is but a drop in the sea compared with what the business has already absorbed, and is still absorbing. Scattered shops in the most distant countries have only been sustained for many years by alms from customers here. The barbarians won't eat the bread, but the bakers sent out must have their salaries. A million of pounds are being begged here; and people (who would prosecute a mendicant of halfpence) will give it no doubt! Yet, O worthy manager of the London Shops, one proved loaf of the real Bread would be infinitely more valuable, and would infinitely more benefit your firm! The villainy of the agents was monstrous, generation after generation, the cost of that which was promised without money and without price was ruinous for centuries; but not all the villainy and extortion multiplied a hundredfold could drive away the poor hungry customers while they had faith in the genuineness of the bread. It was the emptiness and the wind on the stomach after much eating, which raised the fatal doubts as to the _bona fides_ of the whole concern. The great English managers had better ponder this; for at present they grope in the dark delusion that more and better bakers salaried with alms, and new shops opened with eleemosynary funds will bring customers to buy their bran cakes as wheaten loaves. A very dark delusion, indeed! If the pure promised bread cannot be supplied, no amount of money will keep the business going very long. Consider what millions on millions of pounds have been subscribed already, what royal revenues are pouring in still; all meant for investment in wholesome and nourishing food, but nearly all realised in hunger and emptiness, heartburn and flatulence. The old Roman shrewdly calculated that the House of Olympus would prove miserably insolvent if its affairs were wound up, if it tried honestly to pay back all the deposits of its customers. As for this more modern firm, one suspects that, in like case, it would prove so insolvent that it could not pay a farthing in the pound. For Olympus was a house that dealt largely in common worldly goods, and of these things really did give a considerable quantity to its clients for their money; but the new firm professed to sell things infinitely more valuable, and of these it cannot prove the delivery of a single parcel during the eighteen hundred years it has been receiving purchase-money unlimited.

The humble compiler of this rapid and imperfect summary ought, perhaps, to give his own opinion of the firm and the partners, although he suffers under the disadvantage of caring very little for the business, and thinks that far too much time is wasted by both the friends and the enemies of the house in investigation of every line and figure in its books. He believes that Jah, the grand Jewish dealer, was a succession of several distinct personages; and will probably continue to believe thus until he learns that there was but one Pharaoh King of Egypt, but

one Bourbon King of France, and that the House of Rothschild has always been one and the same man. He believes that the Son was by no means the child of the Father, that he was a much better character than the Father, that he was really and truly murdered, that his prospectus and business plans were very much more wise and honest and good than the prospectus as we have it now, and the system as it has actually been worked. He believes that the Comforter has really had a share in this as in every other business not wholly bad in the world, that he has never identified his interests with those of any firm, that specially he never committed himself to a partnership of unlimited liability with the Hebrew Jah, that he undoubtedly had extensive dealings with the Son, and placed implicit confidence in him while a living man, and that he will continue to deal profitably and bountifully with men long after the firm has become bankrupt and extinct. He believes that the corn of the true bread of life is sown and grown, reaped, ground, kneaded, baked and eaten on this side of the Black Sea. He believes that no firm or company whatever, with limited or unlimited liability, has the monopoly for the purveyance of this bread, that no charters can confer such monopoly, that the bread is only to be got pure by each individual for himself, and that no two individuals of judgment really like it prepared in exactly the same fashion, but that unfortunately (as his experience compels him to believe) the bulk of mankind will always in the future no less than in the past persist in endeavoring to procure it through great chartered companies, finally, he believes that the worthy chief baker in London with his million of money is extremely like the worthy Mrs. Partington with her mop against the Atlantic.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE UPPER CIRCLES

(1866.)

Poor dear God sat alone in his private chamber, moody, melancholy, miserable, sulky, sullen, weary, dejected, supenally hipped. It was the evening of Sunday, the 24th of December, 1865. Waters continually dripping wear away the hardest stone; year falling after year will at length overcome the strongest god: an oak-tree outlasts many generations of men; a mountain or a river outlasts many celestial dynasties. A cold like a thick fog in his head, rheum in his eyes, and rheumatism in his limbs and shoulders, his back bent, his chin peaked, his poll bald, his teeth decayed, his body all shivering, his brain all muddle, his heart all black care; no wonder the old gentleman looked poorly as he cowered there, dolefully sipping his Lachryma Christi. "I wish the other party would lend me some of his fire," he muttered, "for it is horribly frigid up here." The table was crowded and the floor littered with books and documents, all most unreadable reading: missionary reports, controversial divinity, bishops' charges, religious periodicals, papal allocutions and encyclical letters, minutes of Exeter Hall meetings, ponderous blue books from the angelic bureaux--dreary as the humor of _Punch_, silly as the critiques of the _Times_, idiotic as the poetry of _All the Year Round_. When now and then he eyed them askance he shuddered more shockingly, and looked at his desk with loathing despair. For he had gone through a hard day's work, with extra services appropriate to the sacred season; and for the ten-thousandth time he had been utterly knocked up and bewildered by the Athanasian Creed.

While he sat thus, came a formal tap at the door, and his son entered, looking sublimely good and respectable, pensive with a pensiveness on which one grows comfortably fat. "Ah, my boy," said the old gentleman, "you seem to get on well enough in these sad times: come to ask my blessing for your birthday _fête_?" "I fear that you are not well, my

dear father; do not give way to dejection, there was once a man--

"O, dash your parables! keep them for your disciples; they are not too amusing. Alack for the good old times!" "The wicked old times you mean, my father; the times when we were poor, and scorned, and oppressed; the times when heathenism and vain philosophy ruled everywhere in the world. Now, all civilised realms are subject to us, and worship us." "And disobey us. You are very wise, much wiser than your old worn-out father; yet perchance a truth or two comes to me in solitude, when it can't reach you through the press of your saints, and the noise of your everlasting preaching and singing and glorification. You know how I began life, the petty chief of a villainous tribe. But I was passionate and ambitious, subtle and strong-willed, and, in spite of itself, I made my tribe a nation; and I fought desperately against all the surrounding chiefs, and with pith of arm and wile of brain I managed to keep my head above water. But I lived all alone, a stern and solitary existence. None other of the gods was so friendless as I; and it is hard to live alone when memory is a sea of blood. I hated and despised the Greek Zeus and his shameless court; yet I could not but envy him, for a joyous life the rogue led. So I, like an old fool, must have my amour; and a pretty intrigue I got into with the prim damsel Mary! Then a great thought arose in me: men cannot be loyal to utter aliens; their gods must be human on one side, divine on the other; my own people were always deserting me to pay homage to bastard deities. I would adopt you as my own son (between ourselves, I have never been sure of the paternity), and admit you to a share in the government. Those infernal Jews killed you, but the son of a God could not die; you came up hither to dwell with me; I the old absolute king, you the modern tribune of the people. Here you have been ever since; and I don't mind telling you that you were a much more loveable character below there as the man Jesus than you have proved above here as the Lord Christ. As some one was needed on earth to superintend the executive, we created the Comforter, prince royal and plenipotentiary; and behold us a divine triumvirate! The new blood was, I must own, beneficial. We lost Jerusalem, but we won Rome; Jove, Neptune, Apollo, Bacchus, and the rest, were conquered and slain; our leader of the opposition ejected Pluto and Pan. Only I did not bargain that my mistress should more than succeed to Juno, who was, at any rate, a lawful wife. You announced that our empire was peace; you announced likewise that it was war; both have served us. Our power extended, our glory rose; the chief of a miserable tribe has become emperor of Europe. But our empire was to be the whole world; yet instead of signs of more dominion, I see signs that what we have is falling to pieces. From my youth up I have been a man of war; and now that I am old and weary and wealthy, and want peace, peace flies from me. Have we not shed enough blood? Have we not caused enough tears? Have we not kindled enough fires? And in my empire what am I? Yourself and my mistress share all the power between you; I am but a name at the head of our proclamations. I have been a man of war, I am setting old and worn out, evil days are at hand, and I have never enjoyed life; therefore is my soul vexed within me. And my own subjects are as strangers. Your darling saints I cannot bear. The whimpering, simpering, canting, chanting blockheads! You were always happy in a pious miserableness, and you do not foresee the end. Do you know that in spite of our vast possessions we are as near bankruptcy as Spain or Austria? Do you know that our innumerable armies are a Chinese rabble of cowards and traitors? Do you know that our legitimacy (even if yours were certain) will soon avail us as little as that of the Bourbons has availed them? Of these things you are ignorant: you are so deafened with shouts and songs in your own praise that you never catch a whisper of doom. I would not quail if I had youth to cope with circumstance; none can say honestly that I ever feared a foe; but I am so weak that often I could not walk without leaning on you. Why did I draw out my life to this ignominious end? Why did I not fall fighting like the enemies I overcame? Why the devil did you get born at all, and then murdered by those rascally Jews, that I

who was a warrior should turn into a snivelling saint? The heroes of Asgard have sunk into a deeper twilight than they foresaw; but their sunset, fervent and crimson with blood and with wine, made splendid that dawnless gloaming. The joyous Olympians have perished, but they all had lived and loved. For me, I have subsisted and hated. What of time is left to me I will spend in another fashion. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And he swallowed hastily a bumper of the wine, which threw him into convulsions of coughing.

Serene and superior the son had let the old man run on. "Do not, I entreat you, take to drink in your old age, dear father. You say that our enemies lived and loved; but think how unworthy of divine rulers was their mode of life, how immoral, how imprudent, how disreputable, how savage, how lustful, how un-Chris-tian! What a bad example for poor human souls!" "Human souls be blessed! Are they so much improved now?... Would that at least I had conserved Jove's barmaid; the prettiest, pleasantest girl they say (we know you are a Joseph, though you always had three or four women dangling about you); fair-ankled was the wench, bright-limbed; she might be unto me even as was Abishag, the Shunammite, unto my old friend David." "Let us speak seriously, my father, of the great celebration to-morrow." "And suppose I _am_ speaking very seriously, you solemn prig; not a drop of my blood is there in you."

Here came a hurried knocking at the door, and the angelic ministers of state crawled in, with super-elaborate oriental cringings, to deliver their daily reports. "Messages from Brahma, Ormuzd, etc., to congratulate on the son's birthday." "The infidels! the mockers!" muttered the son. "Good words," said the father; "they belong to older families than ours, my lad, and were once much more powerful. You are always trying to win over the parvenus." "A riot in the holy city. The black angels organised to look after the souls of converted negroes having a free fight with some of the white ones. My poor lambs!" sighed the son. "Black sheep," growled the father; "what is the row?" "They have plumed themselves brighter than peacocks, and scream louder than parrots; claim precedence over the angels of the mean whites; insist on having some of their own hymns and tunes in the programme of to-morrow's concert." "Lock'em all up, white and black, especially the black, till Tuesday morning; they can fight it out then--it's Boxing Day. Well have quite enough noise to-morrow without 'em. Never understood the nigger question, for my part: was a slave-holder myself, and cursed Ham as much as pork." "New saints grumbling about lack of civilised accommodation: want underground railways, steamers for the crystal sea, telegraph wires to every mansion, morning and evening newspapers, etc., etc,; have had a public meeting with a Yankee saint in the chair, and resolved that heaven is altogether behind the age." "Confound it, my son, have I not charged you again and again to get some saints of ability up here? For years past every batch has been full of good-for-nothing noodles. Have we no engineers, no editors at all." "One or two engineers, we believe, sire, but we can't find a single editor." "Give one of the _Record_ fellows the measles, and an old _l'Univers_ hand the cholera, and bring them up into glory at once, and we'll have two daily papers. And while you are about it, see whether you can discover three or four pious engineers--not muffs, mind--and blow them up hither with their own boilers, or in any other handy way. Haste, haste, post haste!" "Deplorable catastrophe in the temple of the New Jerusalem: a large part of the foundation given way, main wall fallen, several hundred workmen bruised." "Stop that fellow who just left; countermand the measles, the cholera will be enough; we will only have one journal, and that must be strictly official. If we have two, one will be opposition. Hush up the accident. It is strange that Pandemonium was built so much better and more quickly than our New Jerusalem!" "All our best architects and other artists have deserted into Elysium, my lord; so fond of the company of the old Greeks."

When these and many other sad reports had been heard, and the various ministers and secretaries savagely dismissed, the father turned to the son and said: "Did I not tell you of the evil state we are in?" "By hope and faith and charity, and the sublime doctrine of self-renunciation, all will yet come right, my father." "Humph! let hope fill my treasury, and faith finish the New Jerusalem, and charity give us peace and quietness, and self-renunciation lead three-quarters of your new-fangled saints out of heaven; and then I shall look to have a little comfort." "Will you settle to-morrow's programme, sire? or shall I do my best to spare you the trouble?" "You do your best to spare me the trouble of reigning altogether, I think. What programme can there be but the old rehearsal for the eternal life (I wish you may get it)? O, that horrible slippery sea of glass, that bedevilled throne vomiting thunders and lightning, those stupid senile elders in white nightgowns, those four hideous beasts full of eyes, that impossible lamb with seven horns and one eye to each horn! O, the terrific shoutings and harpings and stifling incense! A pretty set-out for my time of life I And to think that you hope some time or other to begin this sort of thing as a daily amusement, and to carry it on for ever and ever! Not much appearance of its beginning soon, thank goodness--that is to say,, thank badness. Why can't you have a play of Aristophanes, or Shakespeare, or Molière? Why should I meddle with the programme? I had nothing to do with first framing it. Besides, it is all in your honor, not in mine. You like playing the part of the Lamb; I'm much more like an old wolf. You are ravished when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks; as for me, I am utterly sick of them. Behold what I will do; I must countenance the affair, but I can do so without disturbing myself. I'll not go thundering and roaring in my state-carriage of the whirlwind; I'll slip there in a quiet cloud. You can't do without my glory, but it really is too heavy for my aged shoulders; you may lay it upon the throne; it will look just as well. As for my speech, here it is all ready written out; let Mercury, I mean Raphael or Uriel, read it; I can't speak plainly since I lost so many teeth. And now I consider the matter, what need is there for my actual presence at all? Have me there in effigy; a noble and handsome dummy can wear the glory with grace* Mind you have a handsome one; I wish all the artists had not deserted us. Your pious fellows make sad work of us, my son. But then their usual models are so ugly; your saints have good reason to speak of their vile bodies. How is it that all the pretty girls slip away to the other place, poor darlings? By the bye, who are going on this occasion to represent the twelve times twelve thousand of the tribes of Israel? Is the boy Mortara dead yet? He will make one real Jew." "We are converting them, sire." "Not the whole gross of thousands yet, I trust? Faugh! what a greasy stench there would be--what a blazing of Jew jewelry!

"Hand me the latest bluebook, with the reports....

"Ah, I see; great success! Power of the Lord Christ! (always you, of course). Society flourishing. Eighty-two thousand pounds four shillings and twopence three-farthings last year from Christians aroused to the claims of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. (Very good.) Five conversions!! Three others have already been persuaded to eat pork sausages. (Better and better.) One, who drank most fervently of the communion wine suffered himself to be treated to an oyster supper. Another, being greatly moved, was heard to ejaculate, 'O, Christ!'... Hum, who are the five? Moses Isaacs: wasn't he a Christian ten years ago in Italy, and afterwards a Mahommedan in Salonica, and afterwards a Jew in Marseilles? This Mussulman is your oyster-man, I presume? You will soon get the one hundred and forty-four thousand at this rate, my son! and cheap too!"

He chuckled, and poured out another glass of Lachryma Christi; drank it, made a wry face, and then began coughing furiously. "Poor drink this for a god in his old age. Odin and Jupiter fared better. Though decent for a

human tipple, for a divinity it is but _ambrosie stygiale_, as my dear old favorite chaplain would call it. I have his devotional works under lock and key there in my desk. _Apropos_, where is he? Left us again for a scurry through the more jovial regions? I have not seen him for a long time." "My father! really, the words he used, the life he led; so corrupting for the young saints! We were forced to invite him to travel a little for the benefit of his health. The court _must_ be kept pure, you know." "Send for him instantly, sir. He is out of favor because he likes the old man and laughs at your saints, because he can't cant and loves to humbug the humbugs. Many a fit of the blues has he cured for me, while you only make them bluer. Have him fetched at once. O, I know you never liked him; you always thought him laughing at your sweet pale face and woebegone airs, laughing '_en horrible sarcasm et sanglante derision_' (what a style the rogue has! what makes that of your favorite parsons and holy ones so flaccid and flabby and hectic?) 'Physician, heal thyself!' So, in plain words, you have banished him; the only jolly soul left amongst us, my pearl and diamond and red ruby of Chaplains, abstracter of the quintessence of pantagruelism! The words he used! I musn't speak freely myself now, and the old books I wrote are a great deal too coarse for you Michael and Gabriel told me the other day that they had just been severely lectured on the earnestness of life by one of your new _protégés_; they had to kick him howling into limbo. A fine set of solemn prigs we are getting!" "My father, the holiness of sorrow, the infiniteness of suffering!" "Yes, yes, I know all about it. That long-winded poet of yours (he does an ode for you to-morrow?) began to sermonise me thereon. By Jupiter, he wanted to arouse me to a sense of my inner being and responsibilities and so forth. I very soon packed him off to the infant school where he teaches the alphabet and catechism to the babies and sucklings. Have you sent for my jovial, joyous, jolly Curé of Meudon?" "I have; but I deeply regret that your Majesty thinks it fitting to be intimate with such a free-liver, such a glutton and wine-bibber and mocker and buffoon." "Bah! you patronised the publicans and sinners yourself in your younger and better days. The strict ones blamed you for going about eating and drinking so much. I hear that some of your newest favorites object to the wine in your last supper, and are going to insist on vinegar-and-water in future."

Whereupon entered a man of a noble and courtly presence, lively-eyed and golden bearded, ruddy complexioned, clear-browed, thoughtful, yet joyous, serene and unabashed. "Welcome, thrice welcome, my beloved Alcofribas!" cried the old monarch; "very long is it since last I saw you." "I have been exiled since then, your Majesty." "And I knew nothing of it!" "And thought nothing of it or of me until you wanted me. No one expects the King to have knowledge of what is passing under his eyes." "And how did you manage to exist in exile, my poor chaplain?" "Much better than here at court, sire. If your Majesty wants a little pleasure, I advise you to get banished yourself. Your parasites and sycophants and courtiers are a most morose, miserable, ugly, detestable, intolerable swarm of blind beetles and wasps; the devils are beyond comparison better company." "What! you have been mixing with traitors?" "Oh, I spent a few years in Elysium, but didn't this time go into the lower circles. But while I sojourned as a country gentleman on the heavenly borders, I met a few contrabandists. I need not tell you that large, yea, enormous quantities of beatitude are smuggled out of your dominions." "But what is smuggled in?" "Sire, I am not an informer; I never received anything out of the secret-service money. The poor angels are glad to run a venture at odd times, to relieve the tedium of everlasting Te Deum. By the bye, I saw _the_ Devil himself." "The Devil in my kingdom! What is Uriel about? he'll have to be superannuated." "Bah! your Majesty knows very well that Satan comes in and returns as and when he likes. The passport system never stops the really dangerous fellows. When he honored me with a call he looked the demurest young saint, and I laughed till I got the lockjaw at his earnest and spiritual discourse. He would have taken yourself in, much more Uriel. You really

ought to get him on the list of court chaplains. He and I were always good friends, so if anything happens.... It may be well for you if you can disguise yourself as cleverly as he. A revolution is not quite impossible, you know." The Son threw up his hands in pious horror; the old King, in one of his spasms of rage, hurled the blue-book at the speaker's head, which it missed, but knocked down and broke his favorite crucifix. "Jewcy fiction _versus_ crucifixion, sire; _magna est veritas et prevalebit!_ Thank Heaven, all that folly is _out*side my brains; it is not the first book full of cant and lies and stupidity that has been flung at me. Why did you not let me finish? The Devil is no fonder than your sacred self of the new opinions; in spite of the proverb, he loves and dotes upon holy water. If you cease to be head of the ministry, he ceases to be head of the opposition; he wouldn't mind a change, an innings for him and an outings for you; but these latest radicals want to crush both Whigs and Tories. He was on his way to confer with some of your Privy Council, to organise joint action for the suppression of new ideas. You had better be frank and friendly with him. Public opposition and private amity are perfectly consistent and praiseworthy. He has done you good service before now; and you and your Son have always been of the greatest assistance to him." "By the temptation of Job! I must see to it. And now no more business. I am hipped, my Rabelais; we must have a spree. The cestus of Venus, the lute of Apollo, we never could find; but there was sweeter loot in the sack of Olympus, and our cellars are not yet quite empty. We will have a *petit souper_ of ambrosia and nectar." "My father! my father! did you not sign the pledge to abstain from these heathen stimulants?" "My beloved Son, with whom I am not at all well pleased, go and swill water till you get the dropsy, and permit me to do as I like. No wonder people think that I am failing when my child and my mistress rule for me!"

The Son went out, shaking his head, beating his breast, scrubbing his eyes, wringing his hands, sobbing and murmuring piteously. "The poor old God! my dear old father! Ah, how he is breaking! Alack, he will not last long! Verily, his wits are leaving him! Many misfortunes and disasters would be spared us were he to abdicate prudently at once. Or a regency might do. But the evil speakers and slanderers would say that I am ambitious. I must get the matter judiciously insinuated to the Privy Council. Alack! alack!"

"Let him go and try on his suit of lamb's wool for to-morrow," said the old monarch. "I have got out of the rehearsal, my friend; I shall be conspicuous by my absence; there will be a dummy in my stead." "Rather perilous innovation, my Lord; the people may think that the dummy does just as well, that there is no need to support the original." "Shut up, shut up, O, my Curé; no more politics, confound our politics! It is Sunday, so we must have none but chaplains here. You may fetch Friar John and sweet Dean Swift and the amiable parson Sterne, and any other godly and devout and spiritual ministers you can lay hold of; but don't bring more than a pleiad." "With Swift for the lost one; he is cooling his 'sæva indignatio' in the Devil's kitchen-furnace just now, comforting poor Addison, who hasn't got quit for his death-bed brandy yet." "A night of devotion will we have, and of inextinguishable laughter; and with the old liquor we will pour out the old libations. Yea, Gargantuan shall be the feast; and this night, and to-morrow, and all next week, and twelve days into the new year the hours shall reel and roar with Pantagruelism. Quick, for the guests, and I will order the banquet!" "With all my heart, sire, will I do this very thing. Parsons and pastors, pious and devout, will I lead back, choice and most elect souls worthy of the old drink delectable. And I will lock and double bolt the door, and first warm the chamber by burning all these devilish books; and will leave word with the angel on guard that we are not to be called for three times seven days, when all these Christmas fooleries and mummeries are long over. Amen. Selah. _Au revoir_. Tarry till I come."

A WORD ON BLASPHEMY.

(1867.)

This is one of our few and far-between outbursts of Rabelasian laughter, irresistibly provoked by the aggressive absurdities of theology; and as such I consider it thoroughly defensible. In all seriousness I affirm that its mockery is far less "blasphemous" than the solemn outrage on reason, the infernal damnation of all mankind who are sensible and sane or who are even mad otherwise than the author, the cold-blooded dissection of the infinite and eternal God as a superior surgeon may dissect an inferior corpse, perpetrated by its prototype the so-called Athanasian Creed. I do not see in what the statement that an old monkey of the tribe once saw the tail of this great big monkey is more irreverent than that other statement how Moses of the tribe of Levi once saw the back parts of the Lord; whom the Church believes to be a Spirit infinite, without parts, a sort of omnipresent æther or supersubtle gas. Nor do I see that the monkey, who is at least a natural animal, is a more outrageous symbol or emblem than the utterly unnatural Lamb as it had been slain, with seven horns and seven eyes, encompassed by all "the menagerie of the Apocalypse." It would be easy to produce, I think, mockeries far more insulting, buffooneries far more bitter and malignant, lavished upon Paganism, Socinianism, Atheism, and many another _ism_, in the works of the most saintly divines. The hierarchy of Olympus is more venerable than the triune Lord of the New Jerusalem; yet how is it treated in our most popular burlesques? I go to a theatre and find a Christian audience, very tenderly sensitive as to their own religious feelings rolling with laughter and thundering applause at the representation of a ballet-girl Jupiter ascending in a car like a monstrous coal-scuttle, with a deboshed mechanical eagle nodding its head tipsily to the pit; a male Minerva, spectacles on nose, who takes sly gulps from a gin bottle and dances a fish-fag carmagnole; a Bacchus sprawling about drunken and brutish as Caliban; all uttering idiotic puns and singing idiotic songs. And if other mythologies were equally familiar, they would doubtless be maltreated with equal contempt. You thus deliver over to your dismal comic writers, to your clowns and merry-andrews and bayaderes, the gods of Homer and Æschylus, of Herodotus, Pindar and Phidias, you the sanctimonious and reverent modern Britons; and you cry out aghast against "atrocious blasphemy" touching a Divinity, who was first the anthropomorphic clan-god of a petty Syrian tribe, who grew afterwards into a vague Ormuzd with the devil for Ahriman when this tribe had been captive in Babylonia, whom you have filched from this tribe which you still detest and disdain, with whom you have associated two colleagues declared by this tribe (which surely ought to know best) utterly spurious, whom you worship with rites borrowed from old pagans you decry, and discuss in divinity borrowed from old philosophers and schoolmen you sneer at; who gave to his tribe some millenniums back laws which you preserve in the filched book of your idolatry, but which not one of you dare read to his wife and children; whose son and colleague gave you laws which are certainly readable enough, but which you are so far from obeying that you would assuredly consign to Bedlam any one seeking to act upon them perfectly.

But mockery of the Olympians hurts no one's feelings, while mockery of the Tri-unity hurts the feelings of nearly all who hear or see it? I know that there are here and there a few pious and tender hearts, with whom habitude has become nature; people who, having less intellectual than cordial energy, more affection and reverence than curiosity and self-reliance, pour their whole melted nature into whatever religious moulds chance to be nearest, and harden to the exact shape and size of

the mould, so that any blow struck upon it jars and wounds them; and the feelings of these I should be very loth to hurt. I care not for propagandism in general, and in such cases above all propagandism is certainly useless. Why seek to convert women to a struggling faith? Let the women be always on the victorious side, let the men do the fighting and endure the hardships. When their struggling faith has conquered such triumph as it merits, they will find the women all at once in agreement with them, converted not by ideas (for which women care not an apple-dumpling) but by feminine love and loyalty to manhood. One must always be very loth, I say, to wound the feelings of the pious and tender hearts, of the beautiful feminine souls; and fortunately these love to seclude themselves in tranquillity, avoiding debates and controversies. Whose religious feelings, then, are likely to be wounded by "atrocious blasphemies," by "blasphemous indecencies"? The feelings of "the gentle spirit of our meek Review," the benign and holy _Saturday!_ The feelings of tract distributors, scripture-readers, polemical parsons, all those in general who violate every courtesy of life to thrust their narrowminded dogmas upon others, and who preach everlasting damnation against people too sensible to care for their ranting! They outrage our reason, they vilify our human nature, they blaspheme our world, they pollute our flesh, and they wind up by dooming us to eternal torture because we differ from them: these trifles are, of course, not supposed to hurt _our_ feelings. We endeavor to enthrone human reason, to ennoble human nature, to restore the human body to its pure dignity, to develop the beauty and glory of the world; and we wind up, not by retorting upon them their fiendish curses, not even by laughing at the idea of an almighty and all-good God, but by laughing at their notions of an almighty and all-good God, who has a Hell ready for the vast majority of us: this horrible laugh lacerates their pious sensibilities, and we hear the venomous whine of "atrocious blasphemy." After condemning us to death they commit us for contempt of court, which surely is an anomalous procedure!

You can mock the Grecian mythology, you can burlesque Shakespeare, without wounding any pious heart? No: Olympus is as sacred to many as Mount Sion is to you; our own Shakespeare is as venerable and dear to us as to you that bundle of dissimilar anonymous treatises which you have made coherent by help of the bookbinder and called the Book of Books. And mark this; the Grecian mythology is dead, is no longer aggressive in its absurdities; the priestcraft and the foul rites have long since perished, the beauty and the grace and the splendor remain. But your composite theology is still alive, is insolently aggressive, its lust for tyrannical dominion is unbounded; therefore we must attack it if we would not be enslaved by it. The cross is a sublime symbol; I would no more think of treating it with disrespect while it held itself aloft in the serene heaven of poetry than of insulting the bow of Phoebus Apollo or the thunderbolts of Zeus; but if coarse hands will insist on pulling it down upon my back as a ponderous wooden reality, what can I do but fling it off as a confounded burden not to be borne?

And now let us consider for a moment the meaning of this word "blasphemy," which is the burden of the _S. R.'s_ slanderous song; not the legal meaning, but the philosophic, the sense in which it would be used by enlightened and fair controversialists. The most Christian _S. R._ says to the Atheistic Iconoclast, You blaspheme. Whom? The Christian God! And the _S, R._ does not appear to see that it is assuming the very existence of God which is in dispute between itself and Iconoclast! For the Atheist, God is a figment, nothing; in blaspheming God he therefore blasphemes nothing. A man really blasphemes when he mocks, insults, pollutes, vilifies that which he really believes to be holy and awful. Thus a Christian who really believes in the Christian God (and there _may_ be a hundred such Christians in England) can be guilty of blasphemy against that God, whether that God really subsists or not; for such a Christian in mocking or vilifying God would really be violating

the most sacred convictions of his own nature. Speaking philosophically, an honest Atheist can no more blaspheme God than an honest Republican can be disloyal to a King, than an unmarried man can be guilty of conjugal infidelity.

> [This "Word on Blasphemy," as I have ventured to call it, is from a long article on the _Saturday Review_ and the _National Reformer_, the rest of which was of merely temporary interest, and that only to the readers of those two journals. The "outburst of Rabelasian laughter" which so provoked the _Saturday Review_, was a short satire on Christian theology and priestcraft, entitled "The Fanatical Monkeys," ascribed to Charles Southwell, and just then published in the _National Reformer_.--Editor.]

HEINE ON AN ILLUSTRIOUS EXILE WITH SOMETHING ABOUT WHALES

(From the "De l'Allemagne.") (1867.)

Neptune is still the monarch of the empire of the seas, and Pluto (although metamorphosed into the Devil) has retained the throne of Tartarus. They have both been more lucky than their brother Jupiter, who had to suffer specially the vicissitudes of fortune. This third son of Saturn, who after the fall of his sire assumed the sovereignty of the heavens, reigned for a long series of years on the summit of Olympus, surrounded by a jovial court of high and of most high gods and demigods, as well as on high and of most high goddesses and nymphs--their celestial ladies of the bedchamber and maids of honor, who all led a joyous life, replete with ambrosia and nectar, despising the clowns attached to the soil down here, and taking no thought of the morrow. Alas, when the reign of the Cross, the empire of suffering, was proclaimed, the supreme Chronide emigrated and disappeared amidst the tumult of the barbarian tribes which invaded the Roman world. All traces of the ex-God were lost, and I have questioned in vain old chronicles and old women; no one has been able to furnish me with any information as to his destiny. I have burrowed in many a library, where I made them bring me the most magnificent _codex_ enriched with gold and jewels, veritable odalisques in the harem of science; and as is the custom, I here render my public thanks to the erudite eunuchs who, without too much grumbling and sometimes even with affability, have given me access to these luminous treasures confided to their care. I am now convinced that the middle ages have not bequeathed to us any traditions concerning the fate of Jupiter after the fall of Paganism. All that I have been able to discover in connection with this subject is the history told me long ago by my friend Niels Andersen.

I have just mentioned Niels Andersen, and this good figure, at once so droll and so lovable, emerges all riant in my memory. I must devote a few lines to him here. For the rest, I like to indicate my authorities and to show their good or bad qualities, in order that the reader may be in a position to judge himself how far these authorities deserve to be trusted.

Niels Andersen, born at Drontheim, in Norway, was one of the most skilful and intrepid whalers I have ever known. It is to him that I am indebted for what knowledge I have of the whale fishery. He taught me all the subtleties of the art; he made me acquainted with all the stratagems and dodges which the intelligent animal employs to baffle these subtle snares and make its escape. It was Niels Andersen who taught me the management of the harpoon; he showed me how you should fix

the knee of the right leg against the gun-whale of the boat when launching the harpoon, and how with the left leg you launch a vigorous kick at the imbecile sailor who don't pay out quickly enough the rope attached to the harpoon. To him I owe all, and if I have not become a famous whaler the fault rests neither with Niels Andersen nor with myself, but with my evil star, which has never allowed me in the course of my life to encounter any whale with which I might have engaged in honorable combat. I have only encountered vulgar stockfish and miserable herrings. Of what use is the best harpoon when you have to deal with a herring? Now that my limbs are paralysed I must renounce for ever the hope of pursuing whales. When at Ritzebuttel, near Cuxhaven, I made the acquaintance of Niels Andersen. He was scarcely more nimble himself, for off the coast of Senegal a young shark, which no doubt took his right leg for a stick of barley sugar, had snapped it off with a snap of his teeth. Since then poor Niels Andersen went limping upon an artificial leg manufactured from one of the firs of his country, and which he extolled as a masterpiece of Norwegian carpentry. His greatest pleasure at this period was to perch himself on the top of a large empty barrel, on the belly of which he drummed away with his wooden leg. I often helped him to climb upon this barrel; but sometimes, when he wished to get down again, I would not give him my help except on the condition that he told me one of his curious traditions of the Arctic Sea.

As Mahomet-Ebn-Mansour commences all his poems with a eulogy of the horse, so Niels Andersen prefaced all his narratives with a panegyrical enumeration of the qualities of the whale. He of course commenced with such a panegyric the legend we give here.

"The whale," he said, "is not only the largest, but also the most magnificent of animals; the two jets of water leaping from his nostrils, placed at the top of his head, give him the appearance of a fountain, and produce a magical effect, above all at night, in the moonshine. Moreover, this beast is sympathetic. He has a good character and much taste for conjugal life. It is a touching sight," he added, "to see a family of whales grouped around its venerable patriarch, and couched upon an enormous mass of ice, basking in the sun. Sometimes the young ones begin to frisk and romp, and at length all plunge into the sea to play at hide-and-seek among the immense ice-blocks. The purity of manners and the chastity of the whales should be attributed less to moral principles than to the iciness of the water wherein they continually sport. Nor can it, unhappily, be denied," went on Niels Anderson, "that they have not any pious sentiment, that they are totally devoid of religion...."

"I believe this is an error," I cried, interrupting my friend. "I have lately read the report of a Dutch missionary, wherein he describes the magnificence of the creation, which, according to him, reveals itself even in the polar regions at the hour of sunrise, and when the teams of day, transfiguring the gigantic rocks of ice, make them resemble those castles of diamonds we read of in fairy tales. All this beauty of the creation, in the judgment of the good _dominie_, is a proof of the power of God which influences every living creature, so that not only man, but likewise a great brute of a fish, ravished by this spectacle, adores the Creator and addresses to him its prayers. The _dominie_ assures us that he has seen with his own eyes a whale which held itself erect against the wall of a block of ice, and swayed the upper part of its body as men do in prayer."

Niels Andersen admitted that he had himself seen whales which, propping themselves against a cliff of ice, indulged in movements very similar to those we remark in the oratories of the various religious sects, but he maintained that devotion has nothing to do with this phænomenon. He explained it on physiological grounds; he called my attention to the fact that the whale, this Chimborazo of animals, has beneath its skin

strata of fat of a depth so prodigious that a single whale often furnishes a hundred to a hundred and fifty barrels of tallow and oil. These layers of fat are so thick that while the colossus sleeps, stretched at its full length upon an icefield, hundreds of water rats can come and settle in it. These _convives_ immensely larger and more voracious than the rats of the mainland, lead joyous life under the skin of the whale, where day and night they gorge themselves with the most delicious fat without being obliged to quit their holes. These banquets of vermin at length trouble their involuntary host and even cause him excessive sufferings. Not having hands as we have, who, God be thanked, can scratch ourselves when we feel an itching, the whale tries to mitigate his pangs by placing himself against the protruding and sharp angles of a rock of ice, and by there rasping his back with a real fervor and with vigorous movements up and down, as we see the dogs rasping their skin against a bed-post when the fleas bite them overmuch. Now in these movements the good _dominie_ thought he saw the edifying act of prayer, and he attributed to devotion the jerkings occasioned by the orgies of the rats. Enormous as is the quantity of oil in the whale, it has not the least religious sentiment. It is only among animals of mediocre stature that we find any religion; the very great, the creatures gigantic like the whale are not endowed with it. What can be the reason? Is it that they cannot find a church sufficiently spacious to afford them entrance into its pale? Nor have the whales any taste for the prophets, and the one which swallowed Jonah was not able to digest that great preacher; seized with nausea, it vomited him after three days. Most certainly that proves the absence of all religious sentiment in these monsters. The whale, therefore, would never choose an ice-block for prayer-cushion, and sway itself in attitudes of devotion. It adores as little the true God who resides above there in heaven, as the false pagan god who dwells near the arctic pole, in the Isle of the Rabbits, where the dear beast goes sometimes to pay him a visit.

"What is this _Isle of Rabbits_?" I asked Niels Andersen. Drumming on the barrel with his wooden leg, he answered, "It is exactly in this isle that the events took place of which I am going to tell you. I am not able to give you its precise geographical position. Since its first discovery no one has been able to visit it again; the enormous mountains of ice accumulated around it bar the approach. Once only has it been visited, by the crew of a Russian whaler driven by-tempests into those northern latitudes, and that was more than a hundred years ago. When these sailors, reached it with their ship they found it deserted and uncultivated. Sickly stalks of broom swayed sadly upon the quicksands; here and there were scattered some dwarf shrubs and stunted firs crouching on the sterile soil. Rabbits ran about everywhere in great numbers; and this is the reason the sailors call the islet the _Isle of Rabbits_. A cabin, the only one they discovered, announced the presence of a human being. When the mariners had entered the hut they saw an old man, arrived at the most extreme decrepitude and miserably muffled in rabbit skins. He was seated upon a stone settle, and warmed his thin hands and trembling knees at the grate where some brushwood was burning. At his right hand stood a monstrously large bird, which seemed to be an eagle; but the moulting of time had so cruelly stripped it that only the great stiff main-plumes of its wings were left, so that the aspect of this naked animal was at once ludicrous and horribly ugly. On the left of the old man was couched upon the ground an aged bald-skinned she-got, yet with a gentle look, and which, in spite of its great age, had the dugs swollen with milk and the teats fresh and rosy.

"Among the sailors who had landed on the Isle of Rabbits there were some Greeks, and one of these, thinking that the man of the hut could not understand his tongue, said to his comrades in Greek, 'This queer old fellow must be either a ghost or an evil spirit.' At these words the old man trembled and rose suddenly from his seat, and the sailors, to their great astonishment, saw a lofty and imposing figure, which, with

imperious and even majestic dignity, held itself erect in spite of the weight of years, so that the head reached the rafters of the roof. His lineaments, though worn and ravaged, conserved traces of beauty; they were noble and perfectly regular. Thin locks of silver hair fell upon the forehead wrinkled by pride and by age; his eyes, though glazed and lustreless, darted keen regards, and his finely-curved lips pronounced in the Greek language, mingled with many archaisms, these words resonant and harmonious:--'You are mistaken, young man, I am neither a spectre nor an evil spirit; I am an unfortunate who has seen better days. But you--what are you.'

"At this demand the seamen acquainted their host with the accident which had driven them out of their course, and they begged him to tell them all about the isle. But the old man could give them but scant information. He told them that from immemorial times he had dwelt in this isle, of which the ramparts of ice offered him a sure refuge against his implacable enemies, who had usurped his legitimate rights; that his main subsistence was derived from the rabbits with which the isle abounded; that every year, at the season when the floating ice-blocks formed a compact mass, troops of savages in sledges visited him, who, in exchange for his rabbit skins, gave him all sorts of articles most necessary to life. The whales, he said, which now and then approached his isle, were his favorite society. Nevertheless, he added that he felt much pleasure at this moment in speaking his native language, being Greek by birth. He begged his compatriots to inform him as to the then state of Greece. He learnt with a malicious joy, badly dissimulated, that the Cross once surmounting the towers of the Hellenic cities had been shattered; he showed less satisfaction when they told him that this Christian symbol had been replaced by the Crescent. The most singular thing was that none of the seamen knew the names of the towns concerning which he questioned them, and which, according to him, had been flourishing cities in his time. On the other hand, the names by which the seamen designated the towns and villages of modern Greece were completely unknown to him; and the old man shook his head often, as if quite overwhelmed, and the sailors looked at each other with wonder. They saw well that he knew perfectly the localities of the country, even to the minutest details; for he described clearly and exactly the gulfs, the peninsulas, the capes, often even, the most insignificant hills and isolated groups of rocks. His ignorance of the commonest typographical names, therefore astonished them all the more.

"The old man asked, with the most lively interest, and even with a certain anxiety, about an ancient temple, which, he said, had been of old the grandest in all Greece. None of his hearers recognised the name,, which he pronounced with tender emotion. At last,, when he had minutely described the place where this, monument stood, a young seaman suddenly recognised the spot. 'The village where I was born,' he exclaimed, 'is situated precisely there. During my childhood I have long watched there the pigs of my father. On this site there are, in fact, the ruins of very ancient constructions, which must have been incredibly magnificent. Here and there you see some columns still erect; they are isolated or connected by fragments of roofing, whence hang tendrils of honeysuckle and red bind-weeds. Other columns, some of them red marble, lie fractured on the grass. The ivy has invaded their superb capitals, formed of flowers and foliage delicately chiselled. Great slabs of marble, squared fragments of wall and triangular pieces of roofing, are scattered about, half-buried in the earth. I have often, continued the young man, 'passed hours at a time in examining the combats and the games, the dances and the processions, the beautiful and ludicrous figures which are sculptured there. Unfortunately these sculptures are much injured by time, and are covered with moss and creepers. My father, whom I once asked what these ruins were, told me that they were the remnants of an ancient temple, of old inhabited by a Pagan God, who not only indulged in the most gross debaucheries, but who was, moreover,

guilty of incest and other infamous vices; that in their blindness the idolators had, nevertheless, immolated oxen, often by hundreds, at the foot of his altar. My father assured me that we still saw the marble basin wherein they had gathered the blood of the victims, and that it was precisely the trough to which I frequently led my swine to drink the rain-water, and in which I also preserved the refuse which my animals devoured with so much appetite.'

"When the young sailor had thus spoken, the old man gave a deep sigh of the most bitter anguish; he sank nerveless upon the stone seat, and hiding his visage in his hands, wept like a child. The bird at his side emitted terrible cries, spread its enormous wings, and menaced the strangers with talons and beak. The she-goat moaned and licked the hands of her master, whose sorrows she seemed trying to comfort by her humble caresses. At this sight a strange trouble swelled in the hearts of the seamen; they hastily quitted the hut, and did not feel at ease until they could no more hear the sobbings of the old man, the croakings of the hideous bird, and the bleatings of the goat. When they got on board their vessel again they related their adventures. Among the crew there chanced to be a scholar, who declared that it was an event of the highest importance. Applying with a sagacious air his right forefinger to his nose, he assured the seamen that the old man of the Isle of Rabbits was beyond all doubt the ancient god Jupiter, son of Saturn and Rhea, once sovereign lord of the gods; that the bird which they had seen at his side was evidently the famous eagle which used to bear the thunderbolts in its talons; and that, in all probability, the goat was the old nurse Amalthea, which had of old suckled the god in the isle of Crete, and which now continued to nourish him with its milk in the Isle of Rabbits."

Such was the history of Niels Andersen, and it made my heart bleed. I will not dissemble; already his revelations concerning the secret sufferings of the whale had profoundly saddened me. Poor animal! against this vile mob of rats, which house themselves in your body and gnaw you incessantly, no remedy avails, and you carry them about with you to the end of your days; rush as you will to the north and to the south, rasp yourself against the ice-rocks of the two poles, you can never get rid of these villainous rats? But pained as I had been by the outrage wreaked upon the poor whales, my soul was infinitely more troubled by the tragical fate of this old man who, according to the mythological theory of the learned Russian, was the heretofore King of the gods, Jupiter the _Chronide_. Yes, he, even he, was subject to the fatality of Destiny, from which not the immortals themselves can escape; and the spectacle of such calamities horrifies us, in filling us with pity and indignation. Be Jupiter, be the sovereign lord of the world, the frown of whose brows made tremble the universe! be chanted by Homer, and sculptured by Phidias in gold and ivory; be adored by a hundred nations during long centuries; be the lover of Semele, of Danae, of Europa, of Alcmena, of Io, of Leda, of Calisto! and after all, nothing will remain at the end but a decrepit old man, who to gain his miserable livelihood has to turn dealer in rabbit skins, like any poor Savoyard. Such a spectacle will no doubt give pleasure to the vile multitude, which insults to-day that which it adored yesterday. Perhaps among these worthy people are to be found some of the descendants of those unlucky bulls which were of old immolated in hecatombs upon the altar of Jupiter; let such rejoice in his fall, and mock him at their ease, in revenge for the blood of their ancestors, victims of idolatry; as for me, my soul is singularly moved, and I am seized with dolorous commiseration at the view of this august misfortune.

(1874.)

:: "Ich hab' mein Sach auf Nichts gestellt,
Juchhe! Drum ist's so wohl mir in der Welt; Juchhe!"--Gôthe.

"He got so subtle that to be Nothing was all his glory." Shelley,
"Peter Bell the Third"

It is now some time since the _Daily News_, which, perhaps with more honor than profit, and not seldom at great risk of its life, had been for many years a really leading Liberal journal, fighting gallantly always in the van, often in forlorn hopes, took to heart a certain very-obvious truth. It awoke fully to the fact that while a captain in the forlorn hope or vanguard is constantly in great peril, and has but few supporters, one with the main body is much less exposed and has many more to help him. Weary and discouraged, it resolved to fall back from the front and join the mass of the army, the myriads of the commonplace and the timorous, the legions of the rich and respectable, the countless hosts of the snobbery of Bumbledom. But in making this "strategic movement," it is well aware that honor equal to the danger is attached to the forlorn hope and the vanguard, and it clung to the honor while renouncing the danger, and continued to call itself a leading Liberal journal when it had quite given up the lead--nay, continues thus to vaunt itself still. This is how some malicious people explain the altered position of the Daily News and its growing number of supporters, or, in the language of periodicals, its increasing circulation. Now, say these impatient and intemperate persons, a paper is free to serve Bumble (as nearly all papers do), or to serve Progress, the enemy of Bumble; but it has no right, while serving the one, to claim the merit of serving the other. This _Daily News_, they go on, which still dares to call itself Liberal, is now just as liberal as the jester's Garrick, who used to set out with generous intentions, and was scared back at the corner of the street by the ghost of a ha'penny. In its case it is the ghost of a penny, the ghost of the representative penny of all the pennies ready to buy vapid twaddle, but not earnest thought.

For my own part, however, I find the _Daily News_ still really liberal, and, in fact, extremely liberal. It is liberal in long special telegrams and interminable Jenkins letters about the most insignificant movements and actions of royal personages. It is equally liberal in reticence, slightly tempered by sneers, as to all advanced movements, all unpopular principles and their champions. It is liberal in the space it gives to all fashionable frivolities, sports and pastimes, to all the bagatelles of life. If it has not a paragraph to spare for a Radical meeting, it has always columns at the command of boat races, yacht races, horse races, cricket and polo matches, and the like important events, as well as other columns for the gossip of clubs and the babble of society. It is liberal in hopefulness that wrong may be right, falsehood truth, evil good. It is very liberal in soft phrases, and in "passages that lead to nothing." Nothing, indeed, is the great end of its endeavor; for what alteration can be needed by a world in which the circulation of the _Daily News_ is continually increasing? Unless, perchance, as the circulation is already "world-wide," the world will have to be extended in order to accommodate it. But this concerns Father God or Mother Nature, not mere mortals. All these liberalities I could amply illustrate did space permit; as it is, I can give but an instance each to the first two. The Prince of Wales being in France, amusing himself like any other man who has money and leisure, "The Prince of Wales in France--Special," heads its placards in the largest letters. On the other hand, I heard one of our three or four greatest writers, Garth Wilkinson, declare at a public meeting that he had written several letters to it on a subject then agitating the public mind, but that he

could as easily get a letter into the moon as into the _Daily News_. Yet the subject was medical; and Garth Wilkinson is not only one of our greatest writers and thinkers, but also an M.D. and F.R.S., who has practised for I know not how much more than a quarter of a century. To refuse his letters on that matter was like refusing to hear Carlyle on Cromwell or Darwin on Natural Selection. Why, then, did the _Daily News_ reject them? For the simply sufficient reason that they advocated the unpopular side of the question.

Yes, it is still liberal and beyond measure liberal in these and many other respects. It has still great care of the people--to keep aloof from them; it loves them more than ever--at a distance. It still belongs to the Left--in the rear. It is still of the Mountain, only it has descended to provision itself; as the sage rhyme runs,

> "The mountain sheep were sweeter,
> But the valley sheep were fatter;
> We therefore deemed it meeter
> To carry off the latter."

It is still Radical, having a rooted love of ease and hatred of disturbance. It is still revolutionary, but has resolved that henceforth revolutions shall be made with rose-water, and omelettes without breaking of....

While thus freely acknowledging that in many things the _Daily News_ is now more liberal than ever it was, I must also record my admiration for its strenuous endeavors to assume an air of aristocratic refinement and repose. From its serene indifference to the troubles of vulgar humanity, from the languid lisp and drawl of its voice, from its perpetual allusions to the luxuries and enjoyments of the wealthy and noble, one readily divines that its staff, like the staff of my Lord Chamberlain or other court lackey, can move only in the highest circles; but whether its members are admitted into these as gentlemen or as gentlemen's gentlemen, I must leave for those familiar with such circles to declare. This is certain, that they flit about amidst a lordly festival in the gay and careless fashion of men who have no thought save of enjoying themselves; not like poor devils who have duties which, though better paid, are as onerous and strictly subservient to the gathering as those of the waiters or the footmen. It must surely be by a mere afterthought, and purely for their own amusement, that they throw off a description of the scene and an account of what occurred there. By the bye, it is rumored that the staff has been thoroughly changed of late years. The old members were able enough, but they were too coarse, too loud, too violent, too opiniative, too much given to discussing important questions as if they really cared for the same. Their manners especially could not be endured One entered the Editor's sanctum (which had then just been refurnished under the supervision of the Count of Monte Cristo) in his wet boots, although embroidered slippers were provided at the foot of the stairs. Another exploded with a "Damned old idiot!" on reading the charge of one of our Right Reverend Fathers in God. Another was caught smoking a clay pipe over a pint of beer, although narghilés and hookahs and the choicest cigarettes, with unlimited supplies of the most costly wines and liqueurs, are always set out for the staff and such visitors as are admitted to the inner offices. The _Daily News_ wrote to my Lord Chief Justice demanding that this fellow should be sent without trial to keep company with Arthur Orton, and for all I know the Chief Justice humbly obeyed. Another was seen walking arm-in-arm with the Editor of the _Times_, and was of course instantly dismissed, the _Daily News_ writing to warn the man of the other journal.

This, I am assured, is historical fact, to which the Editor of the _Times_ will bear witness, if he be not ashamed to avow what may seem to hurt his dignity. For these and the like offences the old members have

been all dismissed.

It is said to be a peculiarity of the _Daily News_ that all the leading articles are manufactured on the premises, if I may venture on a shop phrase in such a connection. I have spoken of the luxury of the Editor's sanctum, which is a large and noble apartment. The leader-writers are borne to the office in closed carriages, with double or triple windows and india-rubber tires, lest some rude oath, or nasty smell, or even the loud noise of the streets should shock them into hysterics, or at least so unstring their nerves as to render writing impossible for the day. In the sumptuous boudoir-sanctum, lounging, smoking, and sipping, they receive on silver salvers telegrams from all parts of the rolling globe, with innumerable communications and documents, written and printed; and such of these as they are pleased to look at tin Epicurean gods:

> "For they lie beside their nectar,
> and the bolts are hurled
> Far below them in the valleys."

They lie a good deal beside their nectar; but their bolts are anything but thunderbolts. Thunderbolts! The mere word would make these gasp and shudder. They are not thunderbolts, they are not rockets, they are not even squibs; they are bonbons and genuine _confetti_, not your _confetti_ of the Carnival.

> "*There* they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
> Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
> Clanging fights and flaming towns, and sinking ships and praying hands.
>
> But they smile, they find a music centered in a doleful song
> Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
> Like a tale of little meaning, tho the words are strong;
>
> Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
> Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
> Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil."

Naturally these lofty beings smile; for what have they to do with the cares and woes, the hopes and fears of ordinary mortals? Besides, battles and shipwrecks, disasters and convulsions, make the best of copy; and the music centred in the doleful song is a hymn of triumph, with the glorious refrain, "Our circulation is still increasing! Our world-wide circulation continues to increase!" And surely the ill-used race of men that till the soil should be appeased and amply satisfied by the showers of bonbons and sweetmeats the _Daily News_ is always flinging down. It has more important duties to attend to than fighting the battles and righting the wrongs of an ignorant, passionate, unreasonable, wretched rabble, considerably addicted to dirt, drunkenness, and vice. For thirty hours at least in every twenty-four it is in attendance on some Royalty or another, or at the sports and entertainments of "Society, with a capital S." It is said that the "copy" of these superlative writers, who always wear kid gloves while writing, is written with golden pens and tinted and perfumed ink, on perfumed and tinted paper. It is moreover said that the journal itself is soon to be printed on vellum, in the illuminated style, with arabesque borders. It is also rumored that the _Court Journal_ and the _Morning Post_, finding themselves quite outdone by the _Daily News_, and their occupation gone, will shortly cease to appear.

I must not omit to mention that I have been told on authority, which I incline to consider good, that in the said gorgeous sanctum is conspicuous a table of commandments, wrought in letters of fine gold, which commandments are these:

I. Thou shalt never be in earnest about anything, and shalt abhor enthusiasm.

II. Thou shalt not have a decided opinion on any subject.

III. Thou shalt never write an unqualified sentence, or risk an unmodified statement.

IV. Thy style shall be always in the tone of a sweet murmur or soft whisper; a lullaby of peace for drowsy-headed Bumbledom.

V. Thou shalt write with an air of assured superiority to everybody, and everything.

VI. Thou shalt ever bear in mind that there is no joy but calm, and that the supreme moral excellence is good taste, which may be quite compatible with meanness, servility, and cowardice, but cannot be compatible with the foolish fervor of zeal.

VII. Thou shalt always mention and allude to as many persons, places, and luxuries of high life as possible.

VIII. Thou shalt drag into every article three or four literary citations or allusions, whether relevant or irrelevant, in order to show to the world thy culture.

IX. Thou shalt carefully avoid mention of all ardent reformers and unpopular thinkers, and their doings, save to lightly banter or coldly rebuke them.

X. Thou shalt treat with profound respect and tenderness all the powers that be, and all popular opinions, social, political and religious, however thou mayest contemn them in thy heart; for great Bumble is the sole lord of large circulations, and only through his continued grace can our circulation continue to increase.

It is by assiduously conforming themselves to this most wise and holy decalogue, that the members of the staff of the _Daily News_ have become such rare flowers of sweetness and light; worthy of that serene Professor of Haughty-culture, Matthew Arnold himself, ere he had perpetrated "Literature and Dogma."

But while, in common with all the other worshippers of the _Daily News_, I exult in its world-wide and ever-increasing circulation, I am haunted by a horrible fear, which I cannot conceal, but will hint and whisper as gently as possible. When a stone falls into a pond--but no, pond is vulgar--when a stone falls into a still lake, the first small rings are clearly defined, but the circlings as they enlarge grow fainter and fainter, until at length they can no more be perceived. Now, as all the world knows, our beloved and revered Daily News, in its ever-increasing circulation, has hitherto followed precisely the same law; and my dread is that it will continue to do so unto the utmost extremity, becoming ever more and more faint and undefined as the circulation increases, until it shall altogether vanish away. It is getting so refined that I fear it will soon be fined away to nothing; so delicate and dainty, that it is already unfit for this rough world, whose slightest shock may kill it; so ethereal that its complete evaporation seems imminent; so supernal that it must surely soon disappear, absorbed into the Empyrean. May that good God, who we have been told "will think twice before damning a person of quality," think many, many times before condemning our fashionable world to such an irreparable loss!

JESUS: AS GOD; AS A MAN

(1866.)

> "These hereditary enemies of the Truth... have even had the heart to degrade this first preacher of the Mountain, the purest hero of Liberty; for, unable to deny that he was earth's greatest man, they have made of him heaven's smallest god."--Heine: Reisébilder.

The doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, which, in whatever relation regarded, is full of self-contradictions and absurdities, is, above all, pernicious in its moral and spiritual results. Most myths have a certain justification in their beauty, in their symbolism of high truth. This one distorts the beauty, degrades the sublimity, stultifies the meaning of the facts and the character wherein it has been founded, taking away all true grandeur from Jesus, benumbing our love and reverence.

Jesus, as a man, commands my heart's best homage. His words, as reported by the Evangelists, are ever-flowing fountains of spiritual refreshments; and I feel that he was in himself even far more wise and good than he appears in the gospel. What disciple could be expected to report perfectly the words of a teacher so mystically sublime? The disciple intends and endeavors to report faithfully; but when he hears words which to him are without sense, because they express some truth whose sphere is beyond the reach of his vision, he makes sense of them by some slight change--slight as to the letter, immense as to the spirit; for the sense is a truth or truism of his own lower sphere. And when the reports are not put into writing until many years after the words were first uttered, the changes will be important even as to the letter; for a narrative from a man's mouth always alters year after year as much as the man himself alters, for he continues grafting his own sense (which may be deplorable nonsense) upon words which have been spoken. When we find sentences of the purest beauty and wisdom in the records of a man's conversation, we may safely proportion the whole philosophical character of the speaker to such sentences. They mark the altitude at which his spirit loved to dwell. We are but completing the circle from the clearest fragment-arc left. Sentences of wisdom less exalted, or of apparent unwisdom, have perhaps been degraded by the reporter, or have been relative to circumstances which we cannot now learn thoroughly.

Jesus as a man, whose words have been recorded by fallible men, is not lowered in my esteem by such contradictions as I find between his various speeches. Every proverb has its antagonist proverb, each being true to a certain extent, or in certain relations. Could we conceive an abstract intellect, we might conceive it dwelling continually in the sphere of abstract and absolute truth; but no man, however wise, dwells continually in this sphere. As a man living in the world, his intellect no less than his body lives in the relative and the conditioned, and naturally reflects the character of this sphere. The wise man finds himself surrounded and obstructed by certain concrete errors, and he attacks these errors with relative truths. Were the errors of another sort, the truths commonly in his mouth would be of another sort too. Many wise men of different ages and countries are pitted against each other as if their doctrines were fundamentally antagonistic, while, in truth, their doctrines are essentially in unison, and either would have spoken or written much the same as the other had he lived in the same circumstances. For a wise man only attacks the errors that are in his way; things which he never meets he can scarcely think of as obstructions. Hannibal, whose business it is to get into Italy from Gaul, sets about blasting the Alps. Stephenson, whose business it is to

get from Manchester to Liverpool, sets about filling up Chat Moss. The same man, who muffles himself in as many furs as he can get in Greenland, will strip himself to a linen robe in Jamaica. Luther said that the human mind is like a drunken peasant on horseback: he is rolling off on the right, you push him up, he then rolls over on the left. Exactly so; and because one sage, seeing him roll down to the right, has pushed him up on the right, while another sage, seeing him roll down to the left, has pushed him up on the left, are the two sages to be accounted antagonists? Now as a wise man in the course of his existence meets errors of many sorts, some of a quite opposite tendency to others, and as he proves his wisdom by applying to each error its relative or pertinent truth, the rule is almost rigidly exact: that the wiser the man the more of apparent contradictions can be found in his writings or conversation treating of actual life.

But deity is beyond the sphere of the relative and conditioned. When deity speaks and deity reports the speeches, all should be absolute truth transparently self-consistent, else what advantage or gain have we by the substitution of God for Man? Why bring in God to utter and record what could have been as well uttered and recorded by man?

Everything for which we love and venerate the man Jesus becomes a bitter and absurd mockery when attributed to the Lord Christ. The full heart is praising the man; you turn him into God, a ruinous salvo is added to the praise.

He went about doing good: if God, why did he not do all good at once? He cured many sick: if God, why did he not give the whole world health? He associated with publicans and sinners: if God, why did he make publicans and sinners at all? He preached the kingdom of heaven: if God, why did he not bring the kingdom with him and make all mankind fit for it? He loved the poor, he taught the ignorant: if God, why did he let any remain poor and ignorant? He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees: it God, why did he not wholly purify them from formalism, hypocrisy, and unbelief? He died for love of mankind: if God, why did he not restore mankind to himself without dying? and what great thing was it to seem to die for three days? He sent apostles to preach salvation to all men: if God, why did he not reveal it at once to all men, and so reveal it that doubt had been impossible? He lived an example of holiness to us all: if God, how can our humanity imitate Deity? And finally, a question trampling down every assertion in his favor: why did he ever let the world get evil?

One is ashamed of repeating these things for the ten-thousandth time, but they will have to be repeated occasionally, so long as a vast ecclesiastical system continues to rest on the foundations of the absurdities they oppugn. And while one is grinding such chaff in the theological mill, he may as well have a turn at the Atonement, which is, in fact, the essence of the dogma of the Incarnation. No wonder this poor Atonement has been attacked on all sides; it invites attack; one may say that in every aspect it piteously implores us to attack it and relieve it from the misery of its spectral existence. It is so full of breaches that one does not know where to storm.

I am content to note one aspect of this unfortunate mystery which, so far as I am aware, has been seldom studied. The whole scheme of the Atonement, as planned by God, is based upon a crime--a crime infinitely atrocious, the crime of murder and deicide, is essential to its success: if Judas had not betrayed, if the Jews had not insisted, if Pilate had not surrendered, if all these turpitudes had not been secured, the Atonement could not have been consummated. Need one say more? Sometimes, when musing upon this doctrine, I have a vision of the God-man getting old upon the earth, horribly anxious and wretched, because no one will murder him. Judas has succeeded to a large property, and would not be

tempted to betray him by three hundred pieces of silver; the chief priests and elders think him insane, and, therefore, as Orientals, hold him in a certain reverence; Pilate is henpecked and superstitious, accounts the wife's dreams oracular, and will have nothing to do with him; even Peter won't deny him, although he has restored Peter's mother-in-law to life. The situation is desperate; he has again and again prayed his Father to despatch a special murderer to despatch him, yet none appears: shall he have to perish by old age or disease? may he be compelled to commit suicide? must he go back to Heaven unsacrificed, foiled for want of an assassin?

Benjamin Disraeli attained the cynical sublime when he suggested a monument of gratitude to Judas. In fact, Christendom ought to have erected hundreds of years ago three grand monuments to the sub-trinity of Christianity, to the three men without whose devoted assistance the heavenly trinity would not have triumphed in the scheme of Salvation by Atonement; Judas, Caiaphas and Pilate; and as these three men could not have done what they did in furtherance of the glorious work without a well-known inspiration, a fourth memorial--the grandest of all--should have been erected to the Devil. But the world, even the religious world, has always been ungrateful to its most generous benefactors.

Is it not the worst of sacrilege, a foul profanation of our human nature, which for us, at least, should be holy and awful, when the heroic and saintly martyrdom of a true Man is thus falsified into the self-schemed sham sacrifice, ineffectual, of a God? The people who profess belief in this are shocked at the outrage offered to our humanity by the Development Theory, while they themselves commit this outrage more flagitious. Little matters whence we sprang; we are what we are. But much matters to what we may attain. If the Development Theory plants our feet in the slime, the Christian Theory bows our head to the dust. It asserts that human nature could not possibly be so good as Jesus, that human genius could not possibly write the books which tell of him; it denies us our noblest prerogatives, and declares us bastards when we claim a crown. It climbs to God by trampling on Man, it builds Heaven in contempt of Earth, its soul is a phosphorescence from the slain and rotting Body; its fervent faith vilifies us worse than the coldest sneer of Mephistopheles. Yet the orthodox shudder and moan, outraged in their pious sensibilities, when one dares to speak with manly plainness of their doctrines, which commence by polluting our common nature, continue by insulting our reason, and conclude by damning the large majority of us!

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

(1866.)

When I survey with pious joy the present world of Christendom, finding everywhere that the true believers love their neighbors as themselves and are specially enamored of their enemies; that no one of them takes thought for the morrow, what he shall eat or what he shall drink, or wherewithal he or she shall be clothed; that all the pastors and flocks endeavor to outstrip each other in laying not up for themselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; and all are so intensely eager to quit this earthly tabernacle and become freeholders of mansions in the skies; when I find faith as universal as the air, and charity as common as cold water; I sometimes wonder how it is that any misbelievers and unbelievers are left, and feel astonished that the New Jerusalem has not yet descended, and hope that the next morning's _Times_ (rechristened

The Eternities) will announce the inauguration of the Millennium.

What delayeth the end? Can there indeed be any general hindering sin or imperfection among the pure saints, the holy, unselfish, aspiring, devout, peaceful, loving men and women who make up the population of every Christian land? Can any error infect the teachings of the innumerable divines and theologians, who all agree together in every particular, drawing all the same doctrines from the same texts of the one unvaried Word of God? I would fain believe that no such sin or error exists, not a single inky spot in the universal dazzling whiteness; but then why have we to deplore the continued existence of heathens and infidels? why is the New Jerusalem so long a-building? why is the Millennium so long a-coming? why have we a mere Sardowa instead of Armageddon?

After long and painful thought, after the most serious and reverent study, I think I have found the rock on which the ship of the Church has been wrecked; and I hasten to communicate its extreme latitude and interminable longitude, that all Christian voyagers may evade and circumvent it from this time forward.

The error which I point out, and the correction which I propose, have been to a certain extent, in a vague manner, pointed out and proposed before. A clergyman named Malthus, not in his clerical capacity, but condescending to the menial study of mundane science, is usually considered the first discoverer. But mundane science is conditioned, limited, vague, its precepts are full of hesitation; while celestial science is absolute, unlimited, clear as the noonday sun, and its precepts are imperiously forthright.

It seems to me that the one fatal error which has lurked in our otherwise consummate Christianity, and which demands immediate correction is this, that the propagation of children is reconcileable with the propagation of the faith--an error which while it lasts adjourns _sine die_ the day of judgment, and begins the Millennium with the Greek Kalends.

One need not quote the numerous texts throughout the New Testament (let Matthew xix., 12, suffice) proving that Jesus and the epistolary apostles accounted celibacy essential to the _highest_ Christian life. One only of the disciples, so far as we know, was married; and he it was who denied his master; and most of the more profound divines consider that Peter was justly punished for marrying, when Christ cured his mother-in-law of that fever which might else have carried her off.

But many modest people may be content with a respectable Christian life which is not of the very highest kind. They may think that as husbands and wives they will make very decent middle-class saints in heaven, after a comfortable existence on earth, leaving the nobler crowns of holiness for more daring spirits. Humility is one of the fairest graces, and we revere it; but there is a consideration, most momentous for the kind Christian heart, which such good people must have overlooked--very naturally, since it is very obvious.

Jesus tells us that many are called but few are chosen; that few enter the strait gate and travel the narrow way, while many take the broad way that leadeth to destruction. In other words, the large majority of mankind, the large majority of even those who have the gospel preached to them must be damned. When a human soul is born into the world, the odds are at least ten to one that the Devil will get it. Can any pious member of the Church who has thought of this take the responsibility of becoming a parent? I thoroughly believe not. I am convinced that we have so many Christian parents only because this very conspicuous aspect of the case has not caught their view. If the parents could have any

assurance that the piety of their offspring would be in proportion to their own, they would be justified in wedding in holiness. But alas! we all know that some of the most religious parents have had some of the most wicked children. Dearly beloved brethren and sisters pause and calculate that for every little saint you give to heaven, you beget and bear at least nine sinners who will eventually go to hell.

The remedy proposed is plain and simple as a gospel precept: let no Christian have any child at all--a rule which, in the grandeur of its absoluteness makes the poor timid and tentative Malthusianism very ridiculous indeed. For this rule is drawn immediately from the New Testament and cannot but be perfect as its source.

Let us think of a few of the advantages which would flow from its practice. The profane have sometimes sneered that Jesus and his disciples manifestly thought that the world would come to an end, the millennium be inaugurated, within a very few years from the public ministry of Jesus. Luckily the profane are always ignorant or shallow, or both. For, as the New Jerusalem is to come down while Christians are alive, and as Christians in the highest sense or Christians without offspring must have come to an end with the first generation, it is plain that the belief which has been sneered at was thoroughly well founded; and that it has been disappointed only because the vast majority of Christians have not been Christians in the highest sense at all, but in their ignorance have continued to propagate like so many heathen proletarians.

Now, supposing the very likely case that all Christians now living reflect upon the truth herein expounded, and see that it is true, and, therefore, always act upon it, it follows that, with the end of our now young generation, the whole of Christendom will be translated into the kingdom of heaven. Either the mere scum of non-Christians left upon the earth will be wholly or in great part converted by an example so splendid and attractive, and thus translate all Christendom in the second edition in a couple of generations more; or else the world, being without any Christianity, will, as a matter of course, be so utterly vile and evil that the promised fire must destroy it at once, and so bring in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Roman Catholic Christians may indeed answer that, although the above argument is irresistible to the Protestants, who have no mean in the next life between Heaven and Hell, yet that it is not so formidable to them, seeing that they believe in the ultimate salvation of nearly every one born and reared in their communion, and only give a temporary purgatory to the worst of their own sinners. And I admit that such reply is very cogent. Yet, strangely enough, the Catholics, even more than the Protestants, recognise and cultivate the supreme beatitude of celibacy; their legions of unwedded priests, and monks, and nuns and saints are so many legions of concessions to the truth of my main (arguement).

I am aware that one of the most illustrious dignitaries of our own National Church, the very reverend and reverent Dr. Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, has advocated on various grounds, and with impressive force of reasoning, the general eating of babies: and I anticipate that some prudent Christians may, therefore, argue that it is better to get babies and eat them than to have none at all, since the souls of the sweet innocents would surely go to heaven, while their bodies would be very nourishing on earth. Unfortunately, however, the doctrine of Original Sin, as expounded and illustrated by many very thoughtful theologians, and specially theologians of the most determined Protestant type, makes it very doubtful whether the souls of infants are not damned. It will surely be better, then, for good Protestants to have no infants at all: Q. E. D.

THE SWINBURNE CONTROVERSY

(1866.)

Not having read Mr. Swinburne's "Poems and Ballads," I have nothing to say on the special case in which they are involved. A few of the adverse critiques I have chanced to see, and these almost avail to convince one that Mr. Swinburne is a true poet. The _Saturday Review_, shocked out of the complacency of its stark peevishness, cried, "Pretty verses these to read aloud to young ladies in the drawing-room!" As if there were any great book in existence proper to read aloud to young ladies in drawing-rooms! and as if young ladies in drawing-rooms were the fit and proper judges of any great book! I should like to watch the smuggest and most conceited of Saturday Reviewers attempting to read aloud to young ladies in a drawingroom certain chapters in the Bible, certain scenes of Shakespere, certain of the very best passages in Chaucer, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, Burns, Byron, Shelley. When Mr. Swinburne answers that he writes for full-grown men and women, the acute _Fun_ affirms that men have read his book and have condemned it. As if our present brood of periodical critics were men! At home in private life, some of them probably are; but in their critical capacity, that is to say incapacity, how many of them have any virility? The _Athenaeum_ squashes the detestable book by proclaiming that it contains such and such things in the style of Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Ovid, etc.; that is to say, in the style of some of the best Latin and modern French writers! As for _Punch_, he makes a joke worthy of his present lively condition (were it not for Mr. C. H. Bennett, one would say that there was no blood at all left in Mr. Punch when the great Leech dropped off), suggesting that the author should take the appropriate name of Swine-born. But the mass of our present critics are so far beneath contempt that we will waste no more time upon them.

I have just one remark to make, however, before saying a few words on the general issue raised by this particular process. A large number of highly respectable elderly personages in gowns, for the most part belonging to the priesthood of our very dear National Church, and who by themselves and by good Bumbledom in general are accounted the real clerisy of England, have devoted all, or nearly all, the years of their maturity to what is termed the classical instruction of ingenuous youth. The ingenuous youth thus magnificently instructed comprise young men of the highest rank, with the most money and leisure and the reddest blood in the nation. Is it not rather ludicrous to see the said begowned elderly personages all wringing their hands and smiting their breasts, weeping and lamenting in sore astonishment and perplexity and terror, when one of these young men dares to give sign that he has actually in some degree _assimilated_ such classical instruction, instead of merely gulping it down hastily and then vomiting it all crude at the examinations?

As to the general questions, I will start by avowing frankly my conviction, that, in the present state of England, every thoughtful man who loves literature should rejoice in the advent of any really able book which outrages propriety and shocks Bumbledom, should rejoice in its advent simply and exactly because it does outrage propriety and shock Bumbledom, even if this book be nauseous to his own taste and bad in his own judgment. For the condition of our literature in these days is disgraceful to a nation of men: Bumble has drugged all its higher powers, and only the rudest shocks can arouse them from their torpor. We have still, indeed, by the inscrutable bounty of nature, three or four

great writers, the peers of the greatest in Europe; out they stand like so many forest-trees, antique oaks of Old England, in a boundless flat of kitchen-gardens--cabbage and lettuce, radishes and onions, and all the many-leaved "pot-boilers," fit only to be soddened and seethed in a pot, and "to pot," thank goodness, they all quickly go.

Our literature should be the clear and faithful mirror of our whole world of life, but at present there are vast realms of thought and imagination and passion and action, of which it is not allowed to give any reflex at all, or is allowed only to give a reflex so obscure and distorted as to be worse than none. But, it may be objected, suppose Satyrs come leering into your mirror and Bacchantes whirl before it? I answer that the business of a mirror is clear reflection: if it does not faithfully image the Satyr, how can it faithfully image Hyperion? And do you dread that the Satyr will be preferred to Hyperion, when both stand imaged in clear light before us? It is only when the windows are curtained, when the mirror is a black gulph and its portraitures are vague dark shadows, that the beautiful and the noble can pass undistinguished from the hideous and the vile.

If, indeed, the realities not reflected became unrealities, were annihilated, then there would be some sense in veiling those portions of the mirror in front of which certain features of our life are exposed. And if that which sees not could not be seen, it would be very sensible of the hunted ostrich to hide its head in the sand. But we all know that in darkness what is filthy and vile grows ever filthier and viler, what is pure and sweet sickens and decays.

"We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us."

We have suppressed mention of all facts which Bumble would fain ignore, and utterance of all opinions likely to disturb his sacred peace; we have canted enough to nauseate the angels, and have continually lied for God as for a man to pleasure him; so our popular books are fit for emasculated imbeciles, the _Times_ is our leading journal, and the _Daily Telegraph_ boasts the largest circulation in the world! And in the meanwhile the police-reports are full of putrid flesh, all the blue-books are crammed with statistical dry bones; flesh from the carcases and bones from the skeletons in that mass of death and corruption under our imperial whited sepulchre.

I do not complain of the kitchen-garden literature; many of the vegetables are very wholesome and savory in their season, very good for eating to-day and forgetting to-morrow; I complain that in the interest of kitchen-gardens the rearing of all grander and loftier vegetation, the growth of secular forest-kings has become almost impossible in England. The stupidest popular book would not be popular did it not find a large number of people still more stupid than itself, to whom it is really entertaining and instructive. These stupid people one does not blame, one can only pity or envy them according to one's mood. But what shall one say of that large number of educated people who are not stupid, who are familiar with continental literature; who yet, if an English book appears advocating ideas such as they have been delighted with in a French or German dress, feign astonishment and horror, and join with all the poor little curs of Bumbledom in yelping and snarling at it? These men who know well what they are doing are the accomplices of Bumble who does not know what he is doing, who fondly fancies that he is doing something very different, in starving on thin diet and stupifying with narcotic drugs the intellect of our nation once so robust and active; and assuredly if the process goes on much longer we shall come to rank mentally as a third-rate Power in Europe.

No intelligent man in England, without (which is a contradiction in terms) his ideas are exactly coincident with the non-ideas of Bumble, or without he is rich and independent, can afford to devote himself to honest treatment of any great religious or social, moral or philosophical question. If treated in a book, he must himself pay the expense of publication; if treated in an article, not even by payment could he get the portals of any popular periodical to open unto him. For periodicals--newspapers, magazines, reviews--are the Fools' Paradise of the commonplace, the mediocre, the orthodox, the respectable. As the strength of a chain must be measured by its weakest link, so the thought of a periodical must be measured by the thought of its most imbecile subscribers. A periodical to live must be a commercial success; the faintest thrill of new ideas would affect its circulation by shocking off some of its regular readers; it must suit its articles to the size of its customers--a very little hat for a very little head, a very little thought for a very little brain. Thus, though in thinking of their criticisms I spoke so contemptuously of our critics, I do not doubt that many of them are much wiser than their articles. The most honest of them must live by their pen, so they do not attempt to tell the whole truth though they will not tell a lie; many, however, undoubtedly are as apt for the sin of commission as for the sin of omission.

A noteworthy instance occurs to me as I write. An eminent English author, in some respects even a great author, complained that in our country no one since _Fielding_ had dared to attempt the full and faithful portraiture of a man, and he set himself to the task in a work published by instalments. As he entered upon certain phases of common virile life, the circulation of the serial began to decrease. This author was eminent, well-off, much more honest and wise and brave than ninety-nine authors in a hundred: of course, having begun his work he would honestly finish it, he would not only tell the truth and nothing but the truth, he would also tell the whole truth?--he quietly left off painting the features objected to, finished such as were agreeable to the public, and said with a cynical scorn (flavored perhaps with some bitterness of self-scorn), "_So you don't want to see and hear the whole truth? Very well!" This author was revered by the great and noble-hearted Charlotte Brontë; this author was *Thackeray_, strong with all the prestige of _Vanity Fair_; he could not think of continuing a course injurious to his "circulation," so "Pendennis" is not almost worthy (as it might, else have been) to stand beside "Un Grande Homme de Province à Paris" of Balzac.

When such is Thackeray, what must be Gigadibs?

If I write this rather strongly it is because I feel that I am writing in the interest of strength and health and purity and freedom, at a time when the mass of our literature is infected with servile weakness and disease and that "obscenity, which is ever blasphemy against the divine beauty in life." For all obscene things batten on darkness, and light is fatal to them. But for the Bumble who rules over us, the naked beauty is obscene and the naked truth is blasphemous; he thinks that the Venus de Medici came out of Holywell Street, and is inclined to believe that all the fossil records of geology were forged by the Devil to throw discredit upon the book of Genesis. One cannot without a keen pang of shame and rage think of what we are when one remembers what we were, when one recalls our old and glorious literature, in the wide world unsurpassed; our literature noble and renowned, ever most glorious when most manly and daring.

GREAT CHRIST IS DEAD

(1875.)

We have all heard the wonderful story, recounted by Plutarch in his treatise on the Cessation of the Oracles, how, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, a ship sailing from Greece to Italy was becalmed for the night at the islet-rock of Paxus in the Ionian Sea, between the Echinades and Ithaca, when a loud and terrible voice from the land called Thamous the pilot. And he having responded at the third appeal, "I am here; what would you with me?" the voice, grown yet louder and more terrible, commanded him to announce on arriving at Palodes that Pan the Great was dead. Accordingly, when the vessel reached this place, whose site I believe the learned have not yet fixed, Thamous stood on the prow and lifting his voice shoreward cried, "Pan the Great is dead!"--whereon were heard great moanings and lamentations, mysterious and multitudinous. Not having Plutarch at hand, I have refreshed my memory from Rabelais, who repeats this well-authenticated story by the mouth of Pantagruel, in the twenty-eighth chapter of the fourth book of his inestimable work, following soon on that tempest of all tempests wherein Friar John and Panurge so variously distinguished themselves. The good Pantagruel goes on to expound the story after his own manner, thinking that it referred not to the heathen god Pan, but to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, "ignominiously put to death by the envy and iniquity of the pontiffs, doctors, presbyters, and monks of the Mosaic dispensation...."

For with good right may he in the Greek tongue be called Pan, seeing that he is our All; all we are, all we live, all we have, all we hope, is him, in him, of him, by him. He is the good Pan, the great Shepherd.... at whose death were moanings, sighs, trepidations and lamentations in all the machine of the universe, heavens, earth, sea, hells. With this my interpretation the time agrees. For that most good, most great Pan, our only Savior, died at Jerusalem, reigning in Rome Tiberius Caesar.--Pantagruel, these words said, rested in silence and profound contemplation. A little while after we saw the tears rolling from his eyes, large as ostrich eggs. I give myself to God if I lie in a single word." Notwithstanding the thrilling pathos of this close, and my deep reverence for Rabelais, with whom no commentator in holy orders known to me can be compared, except Dean Swift, I am inclined on this point to follow the ordinary opinion that Pan the great god whose death was thus miraculously announced was the Pan of the heathen Greeks. Christ had died, but only _pro tem_; had descended into Hell, but with a return ticket, and simply to harry that realm of Old Harry; in three days he had risen from the dead, in forty more ascended into Heaven; his reign had begun and the reign of the old gods was ended; the spirit was exalted ana the flesh brought low, this world and life were contemned for the life and world to come; Nature, the All, the great Pan, was annulled, and the Supernatural Nothing throned supreme. The poets have chanted this momentous revolution according to their religion, their phantasy, or their mood. Milton in his Hymn on the Nativity shouts harsh Puritanical scorn on the oracles stricken dumb, and the deities overthrown. Shelley in a magnificent chorus of "Hellas," "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever," contests not the justice of their doom, while in the final chorus he predicts the same doom for their conqueror in his turn, In our own day Mr. Swinburne in the "Hymn to Proserpine," and elsewhere, has bewailed the dead immortals, with nothing but aversion and contempt for the pale Galilean, the "ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods." Leopardi an early poem "To Spring," beautiful but not of his deepest, regrets the banished divinities, and since the halls of Olympus are void, appeals to Nature to restore to his spirit its first fire, if she indeed lives. Schiller in his "Gods of Greece" passionately laments them; and Mrs. Browning more passionately answers him, crying, "God himself is the best Poet, and the Real is his song and

the Real we accept perforce in its fulness, but discern not how it can derive from an unreal God. Novalis in his "Hymns to the Night" laments with Schiller the unsouling of Nature, "bound in iron chains by arid number and rigorous rule;" but goes on to celebrate the resurrection of Humanity in Christ. Heine in his. "Gods of Greece," after declaring in his wild way that he has never loved the old deities, that to him the Greek are repugnant, and the Romans thoroughly hateful, yet avows that when he considers how dastardly and windy are the gods who overcame them, the new reigning sorrowful gods, malignant in their sheep's, clothing of humility, he feels ready to fight for the former against these. This change of the celestial dynasty is indeed a favorite theme with him. Elsewhere he pictures the Olympians holding high revelry, with nectar and ambrosia, with Apollonian music and inextinguishable laughter, when suddenly a wretched Jew staggers in, his brow bleeding from a crown of thorns, trailing on his shoulder a heavy cross, which he heaves upon the banquet table; and forthwith the revel is no more, the divine feast disappears, the everburning lights are quenched, the triumphant gods and goddesses vanish terror-smitten, dethroned for ever and ever. And again, in his incomparable "Gods in Exile," he tells us what became of these dispersed Olympians during the Dark Ages, in the thick night of the noontide of Christianity; how they were transformed from celestial to infernal by the monstrous superstition of that baleful era; as we find the hoofs and horns of Pan transferred to the Devil himself; as we find Venus in that legend of Tannhauser which has fascinated so many poets, as well as great Wagner,--

> Vénus, ma belle déesse,
> Vous êtes diablesse!

More than eighteen hundred years have passed since the death of the great god Pan was proclaimed; and now it is full time to proclaim the death of the great god Christ. Eighteen hundred years make a fairly long period even for a celestial dynasty; but this one in its perishing must differ from all that have perished before it, seeing that no other can succeed it; the throne shall remain void for ever, the royalty of the Heavens be abolished. Fate, in the form of Science, has decreed the extinction of the gods. Mary and her babe must join Venus and Love, Isis and Horus; living with them only in the world of art. Jesus on his cross must dwindle to a point, even in the realms of legend under Prometheus on Caucasus. For ages already the Father has been as spectral as Jupiter; for ages already the Holy Ghost has been but the shadow of a shade. And the last, not least, member of the Divine Royal Family, Satan the Prince of Darkness, Prince of this World, and Prince of the Powers of the Air, is no more alive than Pluto, who also was born brother to the Monarch of Heaven. The Hebrew dynasty of the gods is no more; it has done much evil in its long sovranty, which we will try to forget now it ceases to reign; it has done some little good, whose remembrance we will cherish when it is sepulchred, Christ the Great is dead, but Pan the Great lives again, as Mr. Maccall told us in some lines published in this paper several years ago. Pan lives, not as a God, but as the All, Nature, now that the oppression of the Supernatural is removed. I may be told that Christianity is yet alive and flourishing, that its priesthood and its churches hold possession of Europe and America and Australia. So the priesthood and the shrines of the Olympians kept possession of the Roman Empire centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus. When the spirit of a faith has departed, that faith is dead, and its burial is only a question of time. When the noblest hearts worship not at its altars, when the most vigorous intellects abandon its creeds, the knell of its doom has rung. At the risk of being thought bigoted or prejudiced, I must avow that to my mind the decomposition of Christianity is so offensively manifest and advanced, that, with the exception of a very few persons whose transcendent genius could throw a glamor of glory over any creed however crude and mean, and whom I recognise as far above my judgment, I can no longer give my esteem to any educated man who has

investigated and still professes this, religion, without grave deduction at the expense of his heart, his intellect, or his conscience, if not of all three. Miraculous voices are not heard in these days; but everywhere myriads of natural voices are continually announcing to us, and enjoining us to announce to others, Great Christ is dead!

RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

(1876.)

In reviewing Mr. R. H. Hutton's Essay on "Christian Evidences, Popular and Critical," I was obliged to follow his lead, joining issue on such pleas as he put forward. Thus with regard to the resurrection of Jesus, as Mr. Hutton adduced what he thought confirmatory evidence only from the New Testament itself, I confined myself to showing or attempting to show that such evidence is unsubstantial. But I could not consider this argument adequate or conclusive, for there are large general considerations of incomparably greater importance which it leaves out altogether. It is as if a case ruled by broad principles of equity were to be decided on the narrowest technical grounds. Therefore, while confident that even on these grounds the case must go against the Christian believer, I wish to add a few words on its wider relations, in order that the decision may be established, not merely by the letter of the law, but also by the spirit of justice.

We leave thus the torturing of texts in the dim cells of the theological Inquisition, a process by which almost any confession required can be and has been wrung from the unfortunate victims, and emerge into the open daylight of common-sense and reason. And here I venture to assert that if the story of the resurrection and ascension were recorded of any other than Jesus in any other sacred book than the Bible, Mr. Hutton and all other intelligent Christians would not only disbelieve it, but would not even condescend to investigate it, condemning it offhand as too preposterous to be worthy of serious attention. Thus, what Christian has ever deigned to examine critically the marvels affirmed in the Koran, such as Mohammed's visit to heaven; although the Koran can be traced far more surely to the Prophet of Islam than can the Gospels to their reputed authors, and this Prophet bears a far higher character for truthfulness than do the early Christians? Nay, what Bibliolater has ever seriously weighed the evidence for the miracles of his fellow Christian the great St. Bernard; such as those which are minutely related and solemnly attested by ten eye-witnesses, men well known and of unimpeached veracity, and which are thus infinitely better attested than any miracle in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation?

Your enlightened Protestant simply shrugs his shoulders at all such stories, and says with a superior smile: "Of course, mere imposture and collusion, or superstition and delusion; no sensible man can afford to waste his time in weighing that sort of stuff; we don't think twice before determining whether the impossible ever really occurred." How, then, can this enlightened Protestant receive without question the miracles of the Jewish books while rejecting without question all others? We have seen that it cannot be because of any superiority of evidence for the former, since the evidence for the latter is in many cases infinitely greater and better authenticated, and since he does not attempt to weigh evidence before either accepting or rejecting, though he may seek evidence and argument to confirm what he has already given himself to believe. He accepts the Jewish miracles simply because they have come down to him, through many generations of his forefathers, invested with a glamor of sanctity, and he regards them with the eye of

faith which sees, and sees not, just what it wishes; he rejects miracles not in the Bible because they come to him without any hallowed associations, and he regards them with the eye of reason which beholds the plain facts before it, and neither wishes nor is able to avoid beholding them.

It is worth noting that while our Christian advocates insist with all their might, such as it is, upon the resurrection of Jesus, they willingly pass over as lightly as possible, if they do not altogether ignore, a similar miracle guaranteed by the very same authority. In Matt, xxvii., 52, 53, it stands recorded among the marvels following the death of Jesus: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." The reader of Shakespeare will remember the prodigies anterior to the death of Julius Cæsar when--

"The sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

This prodigal multiplicity and superfluity of resurrections seems to have been not a little embarrassing to modern Christian champions, though doubtless it did not in the least trouble the primitive non-scientific believers, to whom nothing was more natural than the unnatural, including the supernatural and the infranatural. An apologist of our days who _must_ affirm the one resurrection, seeing that his whole religion is based upon it, and who, though valiantly defying science, seeks to conciliate historical possibility, finds his task quite heavy enough in accounting for the facts that the risen Jesus "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," and yet that no record of his rising can be found beyond the limits of the New Testament. But the difficulties of the poor apologist are enormously increased if he must further contend that many bodies of the saints came out of their graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many, and still there is no external evidence. We are surely at the utmost limits of the possible in conceiving that Jesus could appear unto five hundred of the brethren at once (there is no hint elsewhere that he had so many permanent followers in his lifetime; in Acts i., 15, we find that there were about one hundred and twenty gathered after the ascension), without the priests and the Roman officials hearing of the apparition and investigating it. But if many others rose from their graves and appeared to many, it is absolutely impossible that anyone in Jerusalem could be ignorant of the miracle; equally impossible that Pilate and his officers did not investigate it, and equally impossible that finding it real he did not report it with the evidence to Rome, for the Empire was a thoroughly organised State, and the Romans were a thoroughly practical and business-like people. Once in the imperial archives, the record of the miracle would have spread everywhere; all subsequent historians would have related it, all subsequent writers referred to it. So it is no wonder that, recoiling from these manifold impossibilities, the Christian advocates prefer to dwell on the one resurrection as if it were unique, and avoid dwelling on the others that by the very same testimony immediately followed it. It is very significant that neither in the Acts nor in the Epistles is there any allusion to these resurrections. When Peter and the others were preaching the resurrection of Christ, why did they not adduce and produce some of these many, risen saints, whose visible, tangible, living and speaking evidence would have been irresistible?

Just as the resurrection of Jesus could be accepted without misgiving by the non-scientific early Christians, to whom miracles appeared among the most frequent occurrences of life, so could the ascension. Their earth was a plane, vaulted by the sky, lamped by the little sun and moon and stars; above this vault was Heaven, where their God dwelt enthroned;

they knew nothing of the law of gravitation; their Christ, standing in the flesh on the Mount of Olives, floated up through this vault to sit enthroned beside his Father in the most natural supernatural manner. We can conceive and sympathise with this simple faith; but it is hard to conceive and sympathise with the blind faith, which seems wilfully blind, of the modem educated Christians. It has been often remarked that Copernicus and Kepler and Newton have destroyed all the old mythologies, including of course the mythology of both the Old and New Testaments. With the earth no longer the universe of mortal life, between a Heaven above its domed firmament and a Hades like a vast dungeon beneath, but a quite infinitesimal grain of sand involved by an infinitesimal drop of dew, floating and revolving in an ocean of space boundless in heighth and depth and breadth, amidst innumerable other spherules, most of which visible are very much greater than itself, and at inconceivable distances from it; with man no longer the lord of the creation, for whose service all things were made, but an animalcule inexpressibly small, living for a moment inexpressibly brief, with limitless time before his beginning and limitless time beyond his end; the Christian mythology and system, among others, because ineffably absurd. Where is the Heaven for its God? where the Hell for its Devil? Where is above? Where beneath? Whence came the winged angels, with their wrings which would not enable them to fly?

If Jesus had ascended and continued to ascend with the speed of light, he might be ascending now and go 011 ascending for millions and millions of years, and still not reach a heavenly region beyond the range of our telescopes I And think of the scheme of the Atonement in the system of the universe, as we are learning to know it now--try to conceive an infinite and eternal God of this infinite and eternal Whole sacrificing his only son for the salvation of us most insignificant insects on our most insignificant earth! The immense conceptions of science dwarf these petty conceptions of mythology to a littleness which reduces them beneath consideration, which in our days reduces them even beneath contempt.

Naturally the churches have always hated and resisted science, and the theologians have seldom dared to face its conclusions. They ignore the immensities, and confine their vision to the pages of a single book, to a history whose chronology counts not six thousand years. But, as I have remarked, even this minute field they cannot hold against the sceptic, who has made them abandon all the rest of the universe. Why did their risen Lord only slink about among his own disciples, appearing to these but at flying instants: why did he not, with his well-known features and with the wounds of the nails and the spear in his body, confront the chief priests and Pilate and the whole of Jerusalem, and compel them to acknowledge and bear enduring witness to his resurrection? Why did he not summon all the people from the highest to the lowest to the solemn spectacle of his ascension, securing multitudinous and permanently recorded evidence such as none of us could doubt? We might go on asking Why? and Why? and Why? in this fashion on a hundred points, confident that to not one of our questions could the Christian apologist give a straightforward and satisfactory answer. As the scheme of the Atonement is presented to us, God sacrificed his only son that all mankind might be saved through belief in him; yet not merely neglected to secure trustworthy evidence and certain record of this supreme fact and the miracles attesting it, but adopted every means possible to make the evidence untrustworthy, the record uncertain, the miracles and the sacrifice incredible.

SOME MUSLIM LAWS AND BELIEFS

(1876.)

The following notes are drawn from E. W. Lane's charming and instructive "Manners and Customs of the Modem Egyptians" (fifth and standard ed., 1860), a worthy companion to Sir Gardner Wilkinson's book on the Ancient Egyptians, and written about forty years since, before steam-communication had materially changed that people. The muédoins, whose summons to prayer is one of the few audible charms of the East to a western, are generally chosen from the blind, in order that the harems and terraces of houses may not be overlooked from the minarets. _Our_ callers to prayer are generally blind also; but this is because few clearsighted men will in these days accept the office. The imams or priests and other religious officials are all paid from the funds of their respective mosques, and not by any contributions exacted from the people: a lesson to us with our State Church. The imâms have no authority above other persons, and enjoy no respect save for reputed learning and piety; they are not a distinct order of men set apart for the ministry, but may resign or be displaced, losing with the office the title of imâm; they chiefly obtain their living by other means than service in the mosque (for which their salaries are as a rule only about a shilling a month), many of them being tradesmen: here surely are several good lessons for us. The mosques are open all day, and the great mosque El-Azhar all night; the Muslims have great reverence for them, yet in many of the larger ones persons lounge, chat, eat, sleep, spit, sew, etc.: another lesson to us with our churches nearly always closed and useless. The Muslim does not abstain from business on the Friday, his Sabbath, except during the time of prayer, and for this he has the authority of the Kur-ân: when will our bigoted Sabbatarians learn so much liberal wisdom from him? The Prophet did not forbid women to attend public prayers in the mosques, but pronounced it better for them to pray in private; in Cairo they are not admitted to the public prayers, it being thought that their presence would inspire a wrong sort of devotion. The result is that few women in Egypt pray at all. If ours were in like case, how many churches and chapels would attract large congregations? The Egyptians, like the modern Arabs, are not a truthful people, but there are some oaths which few would falsely take; such as swearing three times by "God the Great," or on a copy of the Kur-ân "By what this contains of the word of God!"--I wonder whether the Christian Englishmen are few who falsely swear by God and on the Bible. Mr. Lane witnessed many instances of forbearance in persons of the middle and lower classes when grossly insulted; and often heard an Egyptian say on receiving a blow from an equal, "God bless thee," "God requite thee good," "Beat me again": how many of the Christians obey in like manner one of the plainest precepts of Christ? In general a quarrel terminates by one or both of them saying "Justice is against me"; often after this they recite together the first chapter of the Kur-ân; and then, sometimes, embrace and kiss one another. If a similar custom prevailed here there would be little serious quarrelling; for the men would all avoid disputes save with pretty girls and charming women, and would always make it up very quickly with them. The Muslim believes that there have been six great Prophets and Apostles--Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed; each of whom received a revealed law or system of religion and morality, each of the first five abrogated and superseded by the next, though all were the same in essentials. Thus the Jews from the time of Moses to that of Christ, and the Christians (if they did not accept the corrupt and idolatrous doctrine of the divinity of Jesus) from the time of Christianity to that of Mohammed, were true believers. Of course the last is the greatest Prophet, and since his revelation the Muslims only have been the faithful. The Pentateuch, Psalms and Gospels, though of divine origin, have been so much altered as to contain very little of the true Word of God; but the Kur-ân is supposed to have suffered no essential change whatever. Jesus was born of a pure virgin by the miraculous operation of God, without any father human or divine.

When he had fulfilled the object of his mission, he was taken up to God from the Jews who sought to slay him, and another man, on whom God had stamped the likeness of Jesus, was crucified in his stead. He will come again upon earth, to establish the Muslim religion and perfect peace and security, after having killed Anti-Christ, and to be a sign of the approach of the last day. In all these doctrines the Muslims are decidedly more consistent and liberal, as well as somewhat less superstitious than the Christians, with their God-man and trinity in unity, their damnation of Mohammed as a mere impostor and of his religion, El Islam, as a vile fabrication of stolen materials. "The Egyptians pay a superstitious reverence not to imaginary beings alone: they extend it to certain individuals of their own species; and often to those who are justly the least entitled to such respect. An _idiot_ or a _fool_ is vulgarly regarded by them as a being whose mind is in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals; consequently, he is considered an especial favorite of heaven. Whatever enormities a reputed saint may commit (and there are many who are constantly infringing precepts of their religion) such acts do not affect his fame for sanctity: for they are considered as the results of the abstraction of his mind from worldly things; his soul, or reasoning faculties, being wholly absorbed in devotion, so that his passions are left without control. Lunatics who are dangerous to society are kept in confinement; but those who are harmless are generally regarded as saints. _Most of the reputed saints of Egypt are either lunatics, or idiots, or impostors._" wonder whether this applies at all, and if it does, to what extent, to the countless saints of our Most Holy Catholic Church of Christendom. In Egypt, as in other countries of the East, Muslims, Christians, and Jews adopt each other's superstitions, while they abhor the leading doctrines of each other's faith. "In sickness, the Muslim sometimes employs Christian and Jewish priests to pray for him: the Christians and Jews, in the same predicament, often call in Muslim saints for the like purpose!" So much human nature is there in man, not to speak of woman. The Muslims profoundly reverence the Kur-ân, yet will quote it on the most trivial occasions in jest as well as on the most important in earnest. They are generally fond of conversing on religion among themselves; and the most prevalent mode of entertaining a party of guests among the higher middle classes, in Cairo, is the recital of the whole of the Kur-ân, which is chanted by special persons hired for the purpose, or other religious exercises. This chanting of the Kur-ân takes up about nine hours. When will our fashionable Bibliolaters issue invitations for the treat of hearing poor curates or scripture readers intone the whole of the Bible, or even so much of it at a time as might be got through in nine hours? When, oh when?

Ladies will learn with approval that it is thought improper, and even disreputable, for a man to be single. Mr. Lane was a bachelor during his first two visits to Egypt; and in the former of these, having to change his residence, engaged another house. The lease was duly signed and some money paid in advance, but the inhabitants of the neighborhood (who were mostly descendants of the Prophet) would not have an unmarried man in their midst. The agent said they would gladly admit him if he would but purchase a female slave, thus redeeming himself from the opprobrium of not possessing a wife of some sort. He managed to secure a house in a less scrupulous quarter, but had to engage that no creature wearing a hat should visit him. The Sheykh or chief of this quarter often urged him to marry; Lane objected that he intended to live in Egypt only a year or two longer. The Sheykh answered, with great moral force and earnestness, that a handsome young widow a few doors off would be glad to marry him, on the express understanding that he should divorce her on going away; while of course he could do so earlier if she did not suit him. Now this young widow, in spite of her religion and veil, had several times contrived (the Sage saith that there is nothing a woman cannot contrive, except to refrain from contriving) to let our Oriental Englishman catch a glimpse of her very pretty face; and the miserable

bachelor was reduced to plead that she was the very last woman he would like to marry _pro tempore_, for he felt sure that once wed he could never make up his mind to part with her. Doubtless all our single men, and especially our Christian young men, would much rather be deemed disreputable and denied decent lodgings than establish their character for virtue and respectability by buying female slaves, however cheap, or marrying nice young widows divorcible at pleasure!

As to polygamy, Mr. Lane remarks that it can only be defended as preventing a greater immorality than it occasions; and that Mohammed, like Moses, did not introduce but limited and regulated it. The ancient Egyptians had but one wife each, though they might have slave concubines. Polygamy, however, is rare, and rarer among the upper and middle classes than the lower; "I believe that not more than one husband in twenty has two wives." The mere sentence, "I give myself up to thee," uttered by a female to a man who proposes to become her husband (even without the presence of witnesses, if none can easily be procured) renders her his legal wife if arrived at puberty. A man may divorce his wife twice, and each time take her back without any ceremony, unless she has paid for it by resigning the reserved third of the dowry, furniture, etc.; but if he divorces her the third time, or puts her away by a triple divorce conveyed in one sentence, he cannot receive her again until she has been, married and divorced by another husband, who must have consummated his marriage with her. To divorce her, he simply has to say, "Thou art divorced," or "I divorce thee"; but the woman cannot separate herself from her husband against his will, unless it be for some considerable fault on his side, such as cruel treatment or neglect. The facility of divorce has depraving effects, upon both sexes. Many men in the course of ten years have married twenty, thirty, or more wives; and women not far advanced in age have been wives to a dozen or more successively. "I have heard of men who have been in the habit of marrying a new wife almost every month." But such conduct is generally regarded as very disgraceful; and few persons in the upper or middle classes would give a daughter in marriage to a person who had divorced many wives.

The women deem it more incumbent to cover the upper and back part of the head than the face; and more requisite to conceal the face than most parts of the person. Many among the lower classes never conceal their faces; women may often be seen with nothing but a narrow strip of rag round the hips. The face-veils have the advantage of leaving the eyes visible, which are generally the most beautiful of the features; fine figures being more common than altogether handsome faces; though some faces are of a beauty distinguished by such sweetness of expression that they seem the perfection of female loveliness, "and impressed me at the time with the idea that their equal could not be found in any other country." The women of Cairo are less strictly guarded than in most Eastern lands; wives are proud of the restraint as showing that the husbands value them highly, looking upon themselves as hidden treasures. To such an absurd extent do Muslims carry their feeling of the sacredness of women that entrance into the tombs of some women is forbidden to men; and a man and woman are never buried in the same vault, without a wall between them--as if their very corpses might get up to mischief. For adultery on the part of the woman the Kur-ân prescribes death by stoning, but drowning is generally substituted. Unless detected by an officer of justice _four eye-witnesses are required_; failing these, the accuser is to be scourged with eighty stripes. This extraordinary law is traced to an accusation of adultery against the Prophet's favorite wife "Aïsheh," who was thus absolved from punishment, and subsequent revelations established her innocence. If we had a similar law here we might close our Divorce Court. If a husband without any witnesses accuses his wife of adultery, he must swear four times by God that he speaks the truth, and the fifth time imprecate God's curse on himself if he is a liar; but the wife can counterbalance

this by swearing four times by God that he is a liar, and the fifth time imprecating God's wrath on herself if he speaks the truth. The commentators and lawyers have agreed that in this dilemma the marriage must be dissolved. When a peasant woman is found to have been unfaithful to her husband, in general he or her brother throws her into the Nile, with a stone tied to her neck; or cuts her to pieces and then throws these into the river. In most instances a father or brother punishes in the same manner an unmarried daughter or sister who has been guilty of incontinence. These relatives are considered more disgraced than the husband by the crime of the woman; and are often despised if they do not thus punish her. Women in easy circumstances are put to bed for from three to six days after childbirth; but poor women in the same case seldom take to bed at all, and after a day or two resume their ordinary occupations, if these do not require great exertion.

The law of inheritance is remarkable in two respects; primogeniture is not privileged, and in most cases the share of a female is half that of a male in the same degree of relationship. A debtor is only kept imprisoned for debt if he cannot prove himself insolvent; but if able, he may be made work out what he owes. Apostacy from the faith is death if not recanted on three warnings. Blasphemy against God or any of the Great Prophets, whether repented or not, is instant death: on the ground that apostacy or infidelity is but ignorance and misjudgment, while blasphemy shows utter depravity. If Christians blaspheming Mohammed were punished as are Muslims blaspheming Christians, what a number of our enlightened clerical teachers would have died the death of malefactors!

The Copts, or descendants of the ancient Egyptians, said to number about 150,000, are Christians, but scarcely a credit to that religion whose votaries boast of its civilising and elevating character. The fact is that in advanced countries the Christianity has been civilised by the Secularism, not the Secularism by the Christianity; in countries where the sciences and arts are stationary or retrograde, Christianity proves that it has in itself no motive-power, and is generally even more degraded than the other superstitions around it. Mr. Lane almost despaired of learning anything about these Copts, until he had the good fortune to become acquainted with a character of which he had doubted the existence--a Copt of a liberal as well as an intelligent mind. They hate the Greeks and all other Christians not of their own sect much worse than they hate the Muslims themselves. The priests are supported only by alms or by their own industry. Their language is a dead one. They pray seven times a day, in the course of these reciting the whole Book of Psalms, as well as chapters of the Bible, prayers, etc.: a fine example to their lax co-religionists here. They have long and arduous fasts. In spite or because of all this, they bear a very bad character as sullen, avaricious, abominable dissemblers, cringing or domineering according to circumstances. The one respectable Copt discovered by Lane admitted that they are generally ignorant, faithless, worldly, sensual, and drunken; he declared that the Patriarch was a tyrant and suborner of false witnesses; that the monks and priests in Cairo are seen every evening begging and asking the loan of money, which they never repay, at the houses of their parishioners and other acquaintances, and procuring brandy if possible wherever they call. So much for our esteemed fellow-Christians in Egypt, descendants of what in heathen times was long the foremost nation in the world.

"Women are not to be excluded from paradise, according to the faith of El Islam; though it has been asserted by many Christians, that the Muslims believe women to have no soul. In several places in the Kur-ân, Paradise is promised to all true believers." They will be admitted by God's mercy on account of their faith, not of their good works; but their felicity there will be proportioned to their good works. The very meanest male in Paradise is promised eighty thousand beautiful youths as servants, and seventy-two wives of the daughters of Paradise. These

celestial virgins we commonly call houris, but learned and accurate Mr-Lane terms them hooreeyehs, vividly suggesting that the Muslim saints burst into rapturous and prolonged hoorays on first perceiving them. He may also have the wives he had here below, if he wants them; and doubtless the good will desire the good. On behalf of the earthly fair sex, I must emphatically protest against this part of the heavenly arrangements. How do we know that the good husband will desire the good wife, however good, when he has two-and-seventy maidens of Paradise all to himself? The trust that he will, cannot be trusted; it is a perfidious consolation to poor women. No wonder Muslim wives are obsequious, when it depends on the will, pleasure or caprice of their husbands whether they shall be re-married in the other world or not. Mrs. Caudle herself would scarcely hazard a curtain lecture with this atrocious alternative in prospect. Try to fancy being an old-maid or grass-widow for ever and ever where all the men are very much married, having six dozen wives each at the very lowest! Such a heaven to a good woman were ten times crueller than hell. When the Muslim women have been aroused to a sense of their rights, they will insist on being treated in the next world on equal terms with the men: the meanest woman of the faithful (supposing any woman can be mean) shall have her eighty thousand beautiful servants, and her seventy-two husbands of the youths of Paradise, resplendent, adoring, ever obedient. This settled first, it will be a question for consideration between herself and her terrene spouse whether they shall combine their several establishments, or agree to be divorced by death. But I digress; women always lead us into digressions, only these are usually much more interesting than the dusty high-road along which it is our business to trudge. The meanest of Muslims will further have a very large tent bejewelled with pearls, jacinths and emeralds. He will be waited on by three hundred attendants while he eats, and served in dishes of gold, whereof three hundred shall be set before him at once, each containing a different kind of food, "the last morsel of which will be as grateful as the first." This absence of satiety, this ever-fresh vigor, I believe, is to mark all his enjoyments, however freely he may indulge in them. Though wine is forbidden in this life, he may drink of it _ad libitum_ in the next, and the wine of Paradise doth not inebriate. He shall have perpetual youth, and as many children as he may desire. He shall be ravished with the songs of the angel Israfeel, "whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures." I really cannot go on; my feelings are too much for me. I remember when young being taught to sing (or rather to squall; for my voice could never have been mistaken for that of the angel Isrâfeel, even by a frequenter of revival meetings or music halls):

"I thank the goodness and the grace (grays?)
Which on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days (dace?)
A happy English child.'*

But now that I am a man, this same consideration fills me with bitterest sorrow and anguish, so that I am ready to bellow:

I curse the evil and disgrace
Which have my birth defiled,
Who would have been in other case
A happy Muslim child!

Yea, when I contrast these glowing and glorious prospects held out to the faithful by the Kur-ân, with the everlasting singing in white night-gowns, amidst the howling of elders and composite beasts all over eyes (what our Heine terms "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse"), in adoration of a God like a jasper and sardine stone to look upon, and of a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes; then do I wring my hands and beat my breast and tear my hair, sighing and sobbing, moaning and

groaning, weeping and lamenting most piteously--Alas! and alas! and alas! why was I bom in a Christian land and reared for the Christian Heaven? Would that I had been born among the Muslims and brought up in the faith of El Islâm! So should I be now looking forward (for from such a generous faith never, never would I have lapsed) unto a Paradise worthy of the name; revelling in anticipations of four-score thousand servants, uncloying courses of three hundred dishes, unlimited strong wine without inebriation, six-dozen wives of the refulgent celestial virgins, aging not themselves, aging not me; perpetual youth, unsating and unexhausting raptures, for ever, and ever, and ever; and instead of having to sing my own throat hoarse, I should have the angel Isrâfeel to sing for me. Ah, dear God! Thou most Compassionate! Thou most Bountiful! Thou to whom all things are possible! grant that I may even yet be converted from a doleful Christian infidel into a blessed Muslim true believer! O God the All-merciful, save me from the terrors and tortures of our Sankey and Moody Christian heaven! O God the All-gracious, let me lie secure in the arms of six-dozen hooreeyehs of Paradise of El Islam! Amen, and Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD AND THE SECULARIST

(1876.)

The _Christian World_ of the 1st inst. has another note on the article on "Some Muslim Laws and Beliefs." As Mr. Foote responded to the first note on behalf of the _Secularist_, I, as the author of the obnoxious article, which was mainly mere compilation from the work of a Christian scholar and gentleman, may say a few words on my own behalf in reply to the second, which is as follows:--

"A correspondent writes:--In your 'Notes by the Way' last week there is a painful, though not unseasonable, quotation from a writer on 'Muslim Laws and Beliefs.' This, as coming from a Secularist, is deplorable enough. It is very much more so that the late Viscount Amberley, a son of a veteran statesman, should in his 'Analysis of Religious Belief,' which might indeed more justly be termed 'A Panegyric of all Heathen Beliefs, and a Travesty of that of the Christian,' have given a like description of the paradise of the Koran, and should have sneeringly told us that the Christian Scriptures, in their pictures of the heavenly life, '_strangely overlook this enjoyment_' of 'ever virgins' never growing old, who are to 'supply the faithful with the pleasure of love' (vide Vol. II., p. 200). This is but a specimen of the disdainful and derisive tone with which this writer, who at length leaves himself stranded in a region of the dreariest Atheism, continually speaks of that Book which what he terms 'the illusions of our younger days' might have taught him o respect."

I do not doubt that the quotation was painful to the Christian correspondent, since it is always painful to have our lifelong prejudices shocked by those who have never shared them, or who have attained freedom from their yoke. One might give not a few quotations from any number of the _Christian World_ which would be very painful to a pious Muslim. Nor do I doubt that the quotation was not unseasonable, for quotations from the _Secularist_ must always be seasonable in an influential Christian periodical, when they tend to expand the Christian narrowness, and show that there is much to be said in favor of other beliefs. And I admit that, like many other things coming from a Secularist, it must have been deplorable enough to a Christian suckled on the Bible, and assured in his unreflecting ignorance that it is the one true word of the three-in-one true god. But the correspondent finds

it very much more deplorable that a son of a veteran statesman should agree with the Secularist--as if the sons of veteran statesmen were naturally expected to be sunk deeper than other persons in the prevailing superstition. The correspondent who, we may presume, has always been taught, and has never doubted, that all heathen beliefs are wholly devilish, and that the Christian belief is wholly divine, thinks that Viscount Amberley's book is a panegyric of the former and a travesty of the latter. If the unfortunate correspondent had the courage and intelligence to enter upon a real analysis of religious belief, he would soon discover that he and his co-religionists have been all along travestying every form of what they call heathenism. With amusing simplicity he is astonished that Lord Amberley gives a like description of the paradise of the Kur-ân to that which I gave in the _Secularist_, as if he could have been accurate in giving any other, when mine was drawn from one of the most careful and accurate of writers, the Oriental Englishman, unequalled in his knowledge of Arabic literature and life! Why, in the very week following the attack on the _Secularist_, the _Christian World's_ twin sister, the _Literary World_ (perhaps incited thereto by its study of our vilified paper), showed that it had been reading or dipping into Lane, by an article on him under the queer title of "A Man of One Book," he being distinguished for three--"The Manners and Customs of the Modem Egyptians," the translation of the "Arabian Nights," with its peerless notes, and the monumental "Arabic Lexicon"; and the said queerly-named article echoed the general praise of his thoroughness and accuracy, and repeated the statement of those who knew him, that he was a deeply pious man. I am not concerned with the defence of Lord Amberley, and shall therefore not follow further the correspondent's remarks on his book, save to note that a man who says that any such writer "leaves himself stranded in a region of the dreariest Atheism," proves himself by this one phrase utterly incompetent to study that word or understand its subject matter; and, as ignorant and incapable, had better confine himself to the Sunday-school, the Young Men's Christian Association, the religious tea-meeting, and street-corner raving.

It may be as well to say something on my own account, in addition to the vigorous remarks of Mr. Foote, in reply to the first note of the _Christian World_, and vindication of the passage it impugned. And first, as to the Book of Revelation, which claims to be prophetic, and stands in our Bible as the work of St. John the Divine. Luther, indeed, who was not afraid to pass an independent judgment, said, "I look upon the revelation as neither apostolic nor prophetic;" but it is received as both by our English Protestants, and continually referred to by them as the record of a genuine and authentic vision. But I assert, without fear of contradiction, that if they had never known it, and some missionary brought home an account of its marvels as belonging to the faith of some Polynesian islanders, they would be filled with wonder and compassion at the monstrous superstitions of those poor heathen barbarians. Yes, Exeter Hall and the readers and writers of the _Christian World_ itself, would assuredly invoke help to enlighten the degraded idolaters who believed in a heaven whose God was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine; in the midst of whose throne, and round about whose throne, were four beasts--a lion, a calf, a man-faced monster, an eagle--each with six wings, and full of eyes before and behind and within; which beasts never rested day nor night from saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;" and which, moreover, worshipped a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes--a figment more extravagant than the many-headed and many-armed idols of India. And so with the other enormities of the Apocalypse. Our civilised gentlemen of the _Christian World_ can only believe that they believe these things, because hallowed associations and unreflecting faith blind their judgment to the obvious absurdity of the imagery and the conspicuous non-fulfilment of the prophecy, which again and again claims to announce events then at hand, to come quickly.

In the next place I assert that the everlasting monotonous singing of the praises of the lamb, the interminable senseless routine, is not a whit more spiritual, while infinitely less alluring, than the occupations of the Mohammedan Paradise. If it be answered that enlightened Christians have nobler ideas of heaven, I reply that such anticipations are not warranted by the New Testament, and that magnanimous Muslims have also nobler anticipations of paradise, for which there is warrant in the Kur-ân. And while on the subject of spirituality, I may remark that the pure monotheism of the Muslim and the Jew is immensely more spiritual, as well as more rational, than the monotritheism of the Christian, which not only deifies a man, but juggles with a so-called mystery that cannot be expressed in words without self-contradiction, cannot be conceived in thought, and, by the confession of its own apologists, defies reason.

As to the "hysterical buffoonery," I have yet to learn that there is anything hysterical in a jolly burst of Rabelaisian laughter. And as to the "poor hollow mockery," I can assure the writer in the _Christian World_ that the mockery was quite rich, sound and genuine in relation to the Apocalypse of his idolised book and the popular Protestant Moody and Sankey heaven. (By the bye, can anyone inform us whether Mr. Sankey is really a Jew, and not a Christian Jew, as I have heard positively asserted on Hebrew authority?) As to the "blasphemous irreverence" and the "horrible and blasphemous invocation," I deny the possibility of blasphemy where there is no belief. A man may blaspheme that which he accounts worthy of reverence, because in speaking evil of it he violates his own convictions and holiest feelings. But if for me there is no God, how can I blaspheme him? Speaking contemptuously of him, I but contemn nothing. If the writer in the _Christian World_ were accused of blasphemy for reviling Jupiter and Venus, Brahma and Vishnu, Baal and Moloch, the Goddess of Reason and Mumbo Jumbo, he would reply, I cannot blaspheme false gods, meaning simply gods in whom he has no faith. Just so,

I say that I cannot blaspheme the trinity-in-unity of the Christian, which to me is non-existent, absurd, impossible. It would be well for the writers and readers of the _Christian World_ to ponder these things.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

(1865.)

On Christmas day, as on all other chief holidays of the year, the ministers and congregations of our National Church have had the noble privilege and pleasure of standing up and reciting the creed commonly called of St. Athanasius. The question of the authorship does not concern us here, but a note of Gibbon (chapter 37) is so brief and comprehensive that we may as well cite it:--"But the three following truths, however strange they may seem, are _now_ universally acknowledged. 1. St. Athanasius is not the author of the creed which is so frequently read in our churches. 2. It does not appear to have existed within a century after his death. 3. It was originally composed in the Latin tongue, and consequently in the western provinces. Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, was so much amazed by this extraordinary composition, that he frankly pronounced it to be the work of a drunken man." (This Gennadius, by the bye, is the same whom Gibbon mentions two or three times afterwards in the account of the siege and conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, a.d. 1453).

Whoever elaborated the Creed, and whether he did it drunk or sober, the Church of England has made it thoroughly her own by adoption.

Yet it must be admitted that many good churchmen, and perhaps even a few churchwomen, have not loved this adopted child of their Holy Mother as warmly as their duty commanded. The intelligently pious

Tillotson wishes Mother Church well rid of the bantling; and poor George the Third himself, with all his immense genius for orthodoxy, could not take kindly to it. He was willing enough to repeat all its expressions of theological faith--in fact, their perfect nonsense, their obstinate irrationality, must have been exquisitely delightful to a brain such as his; but he was not without a sort of vulgar manhood, even when worshipping in the Chapel Royal, and so rather choked at its denunciations--"for it do curse dreadful." He could keep the faith whole and undefiled by reason, yet did not like to assert that all who had been and were and should in future be in this particular less happy than himself, must without doubt perish everlastingly.

On the other hand one of our most liberal Churchmen, Mr. Maurice, has argued that this creed is essentially merciful, and that its retention in the Book of Common Prayer is a real benefit. Mr. Maurice, however, as we all know, interprets "perish everlastingly" into a meaning very different from that which most members of the Church accept. And his opinions lose considerably in weight from the fact that no man save himself can infer any one of them from any other. For example, if you are cheered up a bit by his notions as to "Eternal" and "Everlasting," you are soon depressed again by his pervading woefulness. Of all the rulers we hear of--the ex-king of Naples, the king of Prussia, the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, Abraham Lincoln, and the Pope included--the poor God of Mr. Maurice is the most to be pitied: a God whose world is in so deplorable a state that the good man who owns Him lives in a perpetual fever of anxiety and misery in endeavoring to improve it for Him.

What part of this creed shocks the pious who are shocked at all by it? Simply the comprehensive damnation it deals out to unbelievers, half-believers, and all except whole believers. For we do not hear that the pious are shocked by the confession of theological or theoillogical faith itself. Their reverence bows and kisses the rod, which we cool outsiders might fairly have expected to be broken up and flung out of doors in a fury of indignation. Their sinful human nature is shocked on account of their fellow-men; their divine religious nature is not shocked on account of their God: yet does not the creed use God as badly as man?

A chemist secures some air, and analyses it into its ultimate constituents, and states with precise numerals the proportions of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid therein. Just so the author of this creed secures the Divinity and analyses it into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and just as precisely he reports the relations of these. A mathematician makes you a problem of a certain number divided into three parts in certain ratios to each other and to the sum, from which ratios you are to deduce the sum and the parts. Just so the author of this creed makes a riddle of his God, dividing him into three persons, from whose inter-relations you are to deduce the Deity. An anatomist gets hold of a dead body and dissects it exposing the structure and functions of the brain, the lungs, the heart, etc. Just so the author of this creed gets possession of the corpse of God (He died of starvation doing slop-work for Abstraction and Company; and the dead body was purveyed by the well-known resurrectionist Priestcraft), and cuts it open and expounds the generation and functions of its three principal organs. But the chemist does not tell us that oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid are three gases and yet one gas, that each of them is and is not common

air, that they have each peculiar and yet wholly identical properties; the mathematician does not tell us that each of the three parts of his whole number is equal to the whole, and equal to each of the others, and yet less than the whole and unequal to either of the others; the anatomist does not tell us that brain and lungs and heart are each distinct and yet all the same in substance, structure, and function, and that each is in itself the whole body and at the same time is not: while the author of this creed does tell us analogous contradictions of the three members and the whole of his God. And the chemist, the mathematician, and the anatomist do not damn us (except, perhaps, by way of expletive at our stupidity) if we fail to understand and believe their enunciations; but the author of this creed very seriously and solemnly damns to everlasting perdition all who cannot put faith in his. In other words, the chemist, the mathematician and the anatomist try to be as reasonable and tolerant as human nature can hope to be; while the author of this creed aims at and manages to reach an almost superhuman unreason and intolerance.

Giving him the full benefit of this difference, the fact remains that in other respects he treats his subject just as they treat theirs. He, a pious Christian, professing unbounded adoration and awe of his Divinity, coolly analyses and makes riddles of and dissects this Divinity as if it were a sample of air, a certain number, a dead body. This humble-minded devotee, who knows so well that he is finite and that God is infinite, and that the finite cannot conceive, much less comprehend, much less express the infinite, yet expounds this Infinite with the most complete and complacent knowledge, turns it inside out and upside down, tells us all about it, cuts it up into three parts, and then glues it together again with a glue that has the tenacity of atrocious wrongheadeduess instead of the coherence of logic, puts his mark upon it, and says, "This is the only genuine thing in the God line. If you are taken in by any other, why, go and be damned;" and having done all this, finishes by chanting "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" And the pious are not shocked by what they should abhor as horrible sacrilege and blasphemy; they are shocked only by the "Go, and be damned," which is the prologue and epilogue of the blasphemy. Were the damnatory clauses omitted, it appears that even the most devout worshippers could comfortably chant the "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost" immediately after they had been thus degrading Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the level and beneath the level of their low human understanding. And these very people are horrified by the lack of veneration in Atheists and infidels! What infidel ever dealt with God more contemptuously and blasphemously than this creed has dealt with him? Can it be expected that sane and sensible men, who have out-grown the prejudices sucked in with their mothers' milk, will be reconverted to reverence a Deity whom his votaries dare to treat in this fashion?

Ere we conclude, it may be as well to anticipate a probable objection. It may likely enough be urged that the author and reciters cf the creed do not pretend to know the Deity so thoroughly as we have assumed, since they avouch very early in the creed that the three persons of the Godhead are one and all incomprehensible. If the word incomprehensible, thus used, means (what it apparently meant in the author's mind) unlimited as to extension, just as the word eternal means unlimited as to time, the objection is altogether wide of the mark.. But even if the word incomprehensible be taken to mean (what it apparently means in the minds of most people who use the creed) beyond the comprehension or capacity of the human intellect, still the objection is without force. For in the same sense a tuft of grass, a stone, anything and everything in the world is beyond the capacity of the human intellect: the roots of a tuft of grass strike as deeply into the incomprehensible as the mysteries of the Deity. Relatively this creed tells us quite as much about God as ever the profoundest botanist can tell us about the grass;

in fact, it tells relatively more, for it implies a knowledge of the _Final Cause_ of the subsistence of God, which no future botanist can tell or imply of the grass.

OUR OBSTRUCTIONS

(1877.)

Walking along the Strand and Fleet Street and through the heart of the City, noting the churches on the way--high St. Martin's, St. Mary-le-Strand, St. Clement Danes, the Cathedral, and the many still left wedged in by offices in the narrowest and busiest streets, or lanes of London--I am always reminded of the old wooden ships laid up "in ordinary," as one sees them at Plymouth and Portsmouth, and elsewhere. The churches, like the ships, though not so surely, may have done good service in their time; but their day is past, never to return. When we reflect on the subject, however, we find manifold differences between the state of the churches and that of the ships. These are dismantled, unrigged and dismasted, passive white hulls ghostly on the waters, as it were the phantoms of the old swift-winged and thunder-striking eagles of battle. But the churches remain in all their pride, complete in equipment from lowest vault to topmost spire, even those which are shut silent all the week, without the least pretence of use, and in which on Sunday the droning and drowsy worship of a meagre congregation "rattles like a withered kernel in a large shell." Again, the crews of the ships were discharged as soon as these were put out of commission, while the full crews of the churches, rectors, vicars, ushers, beadles, are kept on at full pay, and saunter through the old exercises and parades as if they were valiant effectives instead of dummies and shams. And this death-in-life of the churches is more dreary and doleful than the naked death of the ships.

These churches officially and effetely represent what is called the English Reformation, the most ignoble in Europe; which, as Macaulay remarks, merely transferred the full cup from the hand of the Pope to the hand of the King, spilling as little,as possible by the way. It is true that the State Church thus established, in spite of its illogical position, boasted great men in its early days, inspired by patriotism as against Rome, with abounding faith for the mysteries, with firm belief in the Bible, with full confidence in metaphysical divinity. But now Rome is formidable no longer, the mysteries are seen to be not only incomprehensible but self-contradictory, the Bible has been torn asunder by criticism, metaphysical divinity has been proved baseless; all the best thought of the age abandons the Church and disregards its dogmas; it has great men no more, nor ever again will have. Its general character is well hit off by Ruskin, himself a devoted Christian, in the phrase "the smooth proprieties of lowland Protestantism."' It may be worth while to quote a little more from him on this subject ("Modern Painters," part v., chap. 20, "The Mountain Glory")--"But still the large aspect of the matter is always, among Protestants, that formalism, respectability, orthodoxy, caution and propriety, live by the slow stream that encircles the lowland abbey or cathedral; and that enthusiasm, poverty, vital faith and audacity of conduct, characterise the pastor dwelling by the torrent side." And again: "Among the fair arable lands of England and Belgium extends an orthodox Protestantism or Catholicism--prosperous, creditable and drowsy; but it is among the purple moors of the highland border, the ravines of Mount Genévre, and the crags of the Tyrol, that we shall find the simplest evangelical faith and the purest Romanist practice." In other words, in religion the highlander is enthusiastic and superstitious, the low-lander lukewarm

and worldly. Thus our fat English Church still keeps to the text, "By grace ye are saved;" but its grace now is chiefly of deportment. It boasts that its clergy are gentlemen; and they may be, as a rule, in society, though we unbelievers seldom find them so in controversy; and it seems to be persuaded that we should continue to allow it several million pounds a year to keep up this supply of gentlemen, when every profession, every trade shows gentlemen quite as good, with the advantages of more intellect, more experience of life, more courage and more sincerity.

There is indeed a section of the clergy full of zeal--to restore the priesthood. How some of these gentlemen compound with their consciences in taking English pay and position for doing Romish work, is a standing puzzle to honest laymen untrained in casuistry. But as they do rank themselves among the parsons of our State Church, their ecclesiastical pretensions are even more ludicrous than they are outrageously arrogant. For ever preaching up the authority and discipline of the Church, they are the first to rebel against it when it does not suit their whims. Thus Mr. Tooth, of Hatcham, not only defies an Act of Parliament, but also defies his bishop, and has plenty of abettors in doing both. I read in the _Daily News_: "Two of Mr. Tooth's supporters, whose letters we have published, insist that the Public Worship Regulation Act is not law and is not binding on Churchmen, because it has never received the sanction of Convocation"--the said Convocation having about as much influence and authority in the country as a tavern discussion society.

Again: "One writer talks of the Church having been declared to be free from all civil jurisdiction in spiritual affairs by many successive Sovereigns. We did not know that our Sovereigns had a right to make laws by Royal declarations, [and] not merely for their own time, but for all time. According to these principles of constitutional government we have three rival law-making powers in England--the Parliament, with the Sovereign for one; the Declaration of the Sovereign for another; and Convocation for a third. Of these Parliament would seem to be the weakest, for it cannot negative the proceedings of the other two; but either of these two can declare invalid what it has done." Can anything be more absurd? Here is a State Church established by Parliament with the sanction of the monarch, endowed with national endowments, liable to be disestablished and disendowed by Parliament with the sanction of the monarch; yet many of its ministers claim to be free from the authority of the State and Parliament to which it owes its existence and subsistence! If they really desire such freedom, they can easily obtain it. They have but to sever their adulterous connexion with the State, restoring to the nation the endowments they have so long misused, and they will then be emancipated from all control, at liberty to teach what doctrines and practise what ritual they please. But these super-spiritual clergy keep a desperate clutch on the revenues. If anything could be more absurd than the defiance of Parliament, it would be the defiance of their ecclesiastical superiors by these champions of absolute ecclesiastical subordination. His bishop inhibits Mr. Tooth, Mr. Tooth coolly disregards the inhibition, and one who sympathises with him calmly writes to the _Daily News_? "Considering how bishops have been appointed since the Reformation, it is hard to see why Mr. Tooth and your correspondents should even pretend to obey them." This is frightful, and may well make even the hardened sceptic shudder. What! a genuine successor of the Apostles (else the English Church has no genuine priesthood) chosen by the Holy Ghost itself (in obedience to the recommendation of the King or Queen) against his own humble wish (for he declared _Nolo Episcopari_); and English Churchmen need not even pretend to obey him! Such is the subordination of those who maintain the extreme authority of the Church!

Jesus has told us that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and the house of our State Church is divided against itself most savagely.

But as the factions, while opposed to each other in all else, thoroughly agree in adhering to their endowments and privileges, and with this object shore up and buttress the edifice whose fall would be otherwise imminent, it behoves us to exert ourselves in bringing to the ground as speedily as possible the unsure and dangerous building, and diverting the immense funds misemployed in sustaining its uselessness to the real edification of the people. For as materially the Church of St. Mary is planted silent, void and death-like in the midst of the living currents of the Strand, obstructing and breaking the broad stream into two narrow arms, so intellectually and morally, in whatever channel our active life may flow, we find a similar obstacle, and in all directions we meet one cry--"The Church stops the way."

But when we have removed the obstacle, when we have blasted it as the Americans recently blasted that other rock of Hell-gate, clearing the entrance to New York's noble harbor, we shall find another and a more inveterate obstacle fronting us--a Book. A book seems but a slight thing to bar the way; but multiplied by millions and millions, and desperately defended as divine and infallible by legions of zealots, it constitutes a far more formidable barricade than the stoutest church of stone. The various sects of Nonconformists, who all join with us in attacking the State Church, will all join the Churchmen to maintain against us their common fetish, the Bible. Regarding this as a human production, there is much of it which we highly esteem; but regarded as the word of God, it works far more evil than good, and the evil is ever increasing while the good decreases; for the revelations of science grow ever more clear, and men must more and more strain their consciences and sophisticate their intellects in order to believe that they believe in the super-human character of the book which reason and science show to be so thoroughly human. We are told by men whom we respect that, considered historically, Christianity and the other great religions merit better treatment than we are wont to accord them. Certainly they merit better treatment than is accorded them by those who crudely brand them all alike, in all their doctrines and legends and ritual, as the mere inventions of priestcraft fostered by kingcraft and statecraft. But we are far from committing ourselves to such an impeachment, not less monstrous than the most monstrous superstition it assails. We freely recognise the naturalness of these religions in the past, their genuine consonance with the communities wherein they arose and prevailed; the sincerity and truth and nobleness formulated, however erroneously, in many of their dogmas, embodied, however imperfectly, in many of their myths; but we see that their day is gone by; we cannot allow the past, which was the real childhood and youth of mankind, to dominate the present, which is its riper age; we discern that the errors of the dogmas and the fiction of the myths are now so obvious and incontestable that to revere them as faultless and authentic is a gross self-delusion. When we say--"The tree is dead; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" we do not imply that it never bore good fruit. On the other hand, when we admit that it once bore good fruit, we do not imply that it is not now dead and an encumbrance to the ground. It is precisely because we do consider these old faiths historically, because we fully recognise their early efficiency and vigor, that we can thoroughly realise their decrepitude and dissolution. And taking western Christianity in particular, both the Roman embodied in Mary and the Protestant embodied in Jesus, we affirm that it has no longer real life, but only the "ghastly affectation of life." Reason and science have disembowelled it, have removed its heart and its brain. It is ready for the historical embalmer. Its great part in the drama of human life is played out; it is still kept above ground, its life still asserted, because large numbers would lose much by the frank acknowledgement of its decease, and other large numbers who cannot bring themselves to face the fact of its death, persist in hoping against hope that the lifelessness is hut a swoon or a cataleptic fit, from which it will yet awaken with renewed strength. We, however, dare to see what we cannot help seeing, we venture to avow the fact which is

beyond fair dispute. Doubtless the living man did brave work in his time; but shall we therefore bow down worshipping his mummy, and keep it from its sepulchre, and continue to allot immense revenues to his army of servitors who have now no service to render? No; the sooner we bury the corpse and send the servitors about their business the better for us and for them.

Thus far I think all Secularists will go with me. But for many, perhaps the majority of us, who are not only Secularists, but Republicans, there is a third great obstacle, the Throne, which is now little else than a costly sham. Yet, sham as it is, it is still strong to obstruct, being encompassed and fortified by the power of the nobles, the power of the clergy, the power of the wealthy, the degraded and degrading snobbishness of the middle and lower middle classes. The artisans and laborers generally, as we know, care nothing for it or are distinctly hostile. We have had some great monarchs, though the greatest we ever had was crown-less, and we can yield to monarchy in the past something of such historical respect as we yield to Christianity. But who that is not a very serf by nature can feel any genuine respect for monarchy as we have it in these days? when the main duty of the King or Queen is to countersign the decrees of Parliament; a duty which the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker could perform just as well and with more promptitude. One need not dwell on the character of the reigning house, which, brought ignobly to the throne, has been consistently ignoble from the first until the accession of her present Most Gracious Majesty. A much nobler royal family would be just as superfluous now as the present we have outgrown the need of a paternal or guardian king. Nor is the question of principle really affected by the fact that this ignoble family, like other species of the lower animals, is excessively prolific, and that every prince or princess born of it, costs us several thousands a year. We should not grudge the money for service rendered; the gravamen of our impeachment is that no monarch now can render service of value. The effective energy of our monarchy in these days is well symbolised in the procedure at the opening of Parliament--royal carriages without royal occupants; royal life-guards with no royal life to guard; a royal robe spread on a vacant throne; the Lord Chancellor reading a royal speech composed by responsible ministers. Her Majesty during fourteen long years has been doing her best to teach us how well we can get on without a monarch, and how stupid we are therefore to keep one at a great expense. We may find something venerable in the throne when put aside and conserved simply as a curious relic of the past; we find it merely absurd while retained for useless use, a pretentious seat with no one to sit in it. As Théophile says: "_Si rien nest plus beau que l'antique, est plus laid que le suranné._"

MR. KINGSLEY'S CONVERTITES

(1865.)

Readers can scarcely have forgotten the amusing "turn-up" between the Rev. Mr. Kingsley and the Rev. Dr. Newman, in which the latter got the former "into Chancery," and punished him so pitilessly. While reading the "Apologia pro Vitâ Sua," one naturally reflected now and then upon the opinions, as stated in the books, of Dr. Newman's antagonist; and the fight grew more and more comically exquisite as one gradually learnt the thorough agreement at bottom of the two who were struggling so fiercely at top. When I speak of Mr. Kingsley's books, I mean his novels and romances, all of which (except the one not yet completely published) I have duly read and enjoyed. As for certain collections of sermons, a dialogue for loose thinkers, a _jeu d'esprit_ on the Pentateuch,

together with various trifles by way of lectures on history and philosophy, I confess that none of these have I ever even attempted to peruse. To palliate this sin of omission I can only urge the high probability that a man of Mr. Kingsley's character must find much more vigorous and ample expression in a free and easy novel than in any didactic or argumentative treatise, with its wearisome requirements of consecutiveness and cramping limitations of logic. I now ask the leaders of the _National Reformer_ to accompany me in a general review of his romances, because I think that such a review will develop two or three facts seldom noticed in the critiques--whether friendly or adverse--that abound upon his writings. Especially, I think that it will be found that the popular phrases, "Muscular Christianity" and "Broad Church," by no means sufficiently characterise his religious tendency; and that, with all the superficial unlikeness, almost amounting to perfect contrast between him and Dr. Newman, the opponents as religious men are fundamentally alike in this--that their respective creeds satisfy, or appear to satisfy, in the same manner the same peculiarly intense want in their several natures.

In every one of Mr. Kingsley's romances there is a chief personage, more or less naturally good but decidedly godless at the beginning, god-fearing and saintly at the end. Some of the romances have each two or three of these convertites, the throes of whose regeneration are the principal "motives" of the most striking scenes, and may be thus fairly said to furnish the plot and passion of the book. My present object is not aesthetic, and I therefore need not argue the question whether narratives thus constructed can have any claim to rank as genuine works of art. With the melancholy Jaques in "As You Like It," I believe:

> Out of these Convertites
> There is much matter to be heard and learned--

so will stay "to see no pastime, I," but run through the stories of these conversions, touching only the most salient points.

Alton Locke, when adolescent, is a very poor tailor, a poet whose verses are far more vigorous than his character, a chartist, a sceptic. He madly falls in love with a Dean's daughter, and through the patronage of the Dean himself, gets a volume of poems published. As the fiercest of the rhymes have been soothed out of this volume by the decorous Dean, Radical friends forward to young Locke a pair of plush-breeches--fitting testimonial to the flunkeyism conspicuous in the omissions. He is imprisoned for inciting a rustic mob to a Chartist outbreak, confounds the prison chaplain by sporting the latest novelties in heresy direct from Germany, shares when released in the delirium of the memorable tenth of April, finds that the lady of his love is to be married to his cousin, and consummates the long orgy of excitement with a desperate fever. The Dean had directed his attention to the study of natural history; hence the frenzy of the fever takes a zoological turn, and he undergoes therein marvellous transmigrations through a series of antediluvian monsters; awaking at last to sane consciousness (_sane comparatively, he is never quite in his right senses, poor fellow_) to find himself nursed by a young widow, the dean's elder daughter, who soothes him with ladings from Tennyson. She has very recently lost her husband, who was merely a brilliant nobleman, and she herself a Convertite; in a few days the modest Alton is hinting at a declaration to her. She will not marry him, nor indeed any other man, but she sends him out to South America on a special poetical mission. On the voyage thither he dies, a believer, regenerate, leaving as legacy to his friends and the world at large a war-song of the Church (ferociously) Militant. What has converted him?--the plush breeches? the crash of the tenth of April? the loss of his first lady love? the reading of the "Lotus-eaters?" the delirious Fugue of Fossils? Some or all of these it must be supposed; for weak though he was, he surely could not have been

seriously influenced by the comical caricatures of Socratic dialectics, which the Dean sometimes played with him in lieu of chess or backgammon.

Next comes Yeast, whose great Convertite is Lancelot Smith. He is introduced to us as fresh from Cambridge, a stalwart gallant fellow of great abilities, rather debauched, but discontented with his debauchery, and utterly without fixed creed. An accident confines him long to the house of the Squire whom he is visiting. During his convalescence he becomes a lover of one of the Squire's daughters--a young lady whose vernacular name is Argemone, and who is herself rapidly growing a perfect saint. He also becomes the friend of a gamekeeper who reads Carlyle, writes poetry, and has experienced special religious illumination. Lancelot then loses all his fortune by the failure of his uncle's bank, and loses his sweetheart by the sulphuretted-hydrogen fever; turns street-porter for the nonce to earn a bit of bread, and finally goes off one knows not whither; an excellent fervid Christian, after playing through several bewildering pages a wild burlesque of the Platonic dialogue with a personage so mysterious that I prefer not to attempt a description of him. What has converted Lancelot? The loss of his money and the death of his sweetheart seem to have been the main influences. For although he was stunned with calamity, I will not deem him so stupefied as to think that he was made a believer by the unintelligible dialogue.

Then follows Hypatia. And here I may remark that I am unable to concur in what seems the general opinion--namely, that Mr. Kingsley intended his heroine to represent the character of the Hypatia of history. Although living in the same city at the same period, both lecturing on philosophy, and both ultimately murdered by Christian mobs; it appears to me that, as women, the two Hypatias differed so much from each other that no one having heard them talk for five minutes could have the slightest doubt as to which was which. History and Mr. Kingsley have each composed an acrostic on this lovely name, and with the same _bouts rimes_; but the body (and the spirit) of the one poem is extremely unlike the body (and the spirit) of the other. Mr. Kingsley proffers us an ancient cup and a flask, Greek-lettered "Wine of Cyprus"; we commence to drink solemnly and devoutly, but--O most miserable mockery! it is indubitable brandy and water. Well may he call this an old foe with a new face! The Kingsley Hypatia is not altogether, but is very nearly a Convertite; so nearly that he would certainly have made her altogether one, had not the _bouts rime's_ been too well known for alteration. Her best pupil (of whom more anon) abandons her, she begins to love a beautiful young Greek monk, and yet (that philosophy may have the help of worldly power in its mortal duel with Christianity) consents to marry the Prefect of Alexandria, whom she very justly despises. While miserable with the consciousness of how low she is stooping to conquer, she is fascinated or mesmerised by an old Jewish hag, and crouches in a sort of fetish worship to what she thinks a statue of Apollo, said statue being represented by the handsome monk. In the agony of shame which follows her discovery of this cheat she performs a short parody of the Socratic dialogue in concert with the pupil who had left her and who has returned a Christian, and at last, when going to the lecture hall (where murder shall prevent her from ever lecturing more) she confesses to a certain longing for Christianity. Why? She was wretched, humiliated, defeated, weary; she had staked all on the red, and had lost--what more natural than a yearning to try the black? And this character is published and generally received for the Hypatia of history!

But the great Convertite of this romance is the pupil already mentioned, the renegade Jew, Raphael Ben Ezra. In the prime of life, wealthy, the favorite comrade of the Prefect, superlatively gifted with that subtle Hebrew clearness, which, swayed by a strong will and intense self-love, can scarcely be distinguished from genius, we find him in the opening

chapters already as used up as the old King Solomon of Ecclesiastes, having exhausted all excitements of wine, women, and philosophy, all voluptuousness, physical and intellectual. Desperate with _ennui_, he abandons Hypatia, casts away his wealth (how many Jews do the same!), barters clothes with a beggar, and sets out to wander the world with an amiable British bull-bitch (afterwards the happy mother of nine sweet infants) for his sole guide, philosopher and friend. The chapter wherein his Pyrrhonism disported itself "on the floor of the bottomless" seems to have been, in great measure, borrowed from the talk of one Babbalanja in Herman Melville's "Mardi;" perhaps, however, both were borrowed direct from Jean Paul's gigantic grotesque, "Titan." Becoming involved in the meshes of the great war in Africa--that revolt of Heraclian against Honorius which Gibbon treats with such contemptuous brevity in his thirty-first chapter--he is nearly killed himself, saves an old officer from death and soon falls in love with this officer's daughter. He reads about this time certain epistles, and infers therefrom that Saul of Tarsus was one of the finest gentlemen that ever lived. Also, while the guest of good Bishop Synesius, he hears Saint Augustine preach, and engages with him in long discussions, fortunately unreported. Returning to Alexandria, he almost converts Hypatia, sees her murdered, sharpens his tongue on Cyril the primate, and leaves again to marry his saintly sweetheart, and end his lire as quite a model Christian. What has converted him? His love for the young Christian? the gentlemanly character of Paul's Epistles? the bull-bitch with her ninefold litter, like Shakespere's nightmare? the murder of Hypatia by the Christians, who rent, and tore and shred her living body to fragments? Or was it mere satiety and weariness of thinking--the weariness which leads so many who thought freely when young to find a resting-place in the bosom of the Church as they get old?

In "Westward, Ho!" the great conversion is of Ayacanorah. But as this is a conversion not merely religious but also moral, social and intellectual, a conversion from barbarism to civilisation, it does not come fairly into the class I am describing. Two incidents in the romance, however, must not be passed over. The first occurs in the Lotus-eating chapter. Will Para-combe tired, as well he may be, of wandering about savage America in search of El Dorado, blindly refuses to see that it is his chief end as man to continue wandering until El Dorado is found and the captain has glutted his heart with vengeance on the Spaniards; and Will gives such excellent reasons for staying in the beautiful spot where he is, with the beautiful and affectionate native woman whom he is willing and anxious to marry in the most legal mode attainable, that Captain Amyas Leigh, who has been urging him onward with true Kingsleyan diffidence and mildness, finds himself dumbfounded. But valuable logical assistance is at hand. A jaguar like a bar of iron plunges on poor Will, and he and his arguments are settled on the spot. Amyas thanks God for this special interposition of providence in his favor. And the man who wrote the adventure of Amyas can sneer at the faith of a Catholic like Dr. Newman! The other incident is the conversion of Amyas from his diabolical hatred of the Spaniards in general, and of the Don with whom Rose had eloped in particular. A lightning-flash strikes him blind, and he thereupon repents him of his hatred and desire of revenge, and, moreover, has a vision of the Don drowned with his sunken galleon, who assures him that his hatred was without just cause. These are the true Kingsleyan dialectics; these, and not those burlesques of what Plato wrote and Socrates spoke, and Mr. Kingsley is no more able to conduct than I am to lead on the violin like Herr Joachim, a great concerted composition of Beethoven. Let a jaguar loose into your opponent's syllogistic premises, blind him with a lightning-flash that he may see the truth and have clear vision of the right way. Yet Mr. Kingsley has undoubtedly read about a tower in Siloam that fell, and what Joshua Bar-Joseph said of the people killed by this accident.

Lastly, we have "Two Years Ago," whose great Convertite is Tom Thumal. Tom is one of the jolliest of characters, true as steel, tough as oak, quick and deft for all emergencies, a compact mass of common sense, and courage, and energy, living in the most godless state, He is not a heathen--he is more godless yet; for a heathen has something of wood or stone which serves him for a deity. In the Saga of Saint Olaf (in that great and glorious work "The Heims-kringla") we read how this pious and terrible king going to his last battle was asked by two brothers, who were freebooters, for permission to fight in his ranks. But although these and their followers were "tall" men, and the king was in sore need of recruits, he would not accept their services unless they believed in Christ. Whereupon they answered that they saw no special need of the help of the "White Christ"; that they had been hitherto wont to believe in themselves and their own luck, and with this belief had managed to pull through very well, and thought they could do the same for the future. Ultimately, these excellent fellows did consent to be baptised and called Christians--not from any religious motive, alas! but only because of a "shtrong wakeness" they had for taking part in a set battle. Tom Thurnal has just as much, and as little, religion as these had. After wandering all over the world in all sorts of capacities, he comes back to be shipwrecked on the Cornish coast, and is the only one on board saved. While he is being dragged up the beach senseless, his belt of money--the fruit of a season at the Australian diggings--disappears; and he resolves to settle in the village, in order to discover it or the thief. Here he falls in love with the village schoolmistress, a sweet mystical devotee, whom he rather suspects of stealing his gold, and whom he defends from one ruffian in order to grossly insult her himself. In the village Tom is doctor, and, when the cholera comes, he is assisted in bringing the village through it by this saintly schoolmistress, and a pious Major, and a fervid High Church parson. At the breaking out of the Crimean War, Tom gets charged with a secret mission to the East. Somewhere in Turkey, in Asia, an imbecile Sheikh or Pasha whom he is endeavoring to serve, mistakes his manoeuvres, and keeps him in captivity for a year or two. From this imprisonment he comes home crushed and abject, "afraid in passing a house that it would fall and smother him," etc., marries his sweetheart and ends a model Christian. What has converted him? Simply, it appears, the year or two of solitary confinement--which took all the pith and manhood out of him. This last case, the work of Mr. Kingsley in the full maturity of his powers, is the most flagrant of all.

If I have not summed up these cases fairly, the novels and romances in question are in everybody's hands to convict me of the unfairness. I have simply sketched the leading points as they remain in my memory, not referring to the books again to pick out what would best serve my purpose. It is not my fault if the personages, who looked so great and grandiose in the flowing and ample draperies of romance, do not strip well for anatomy.

Now, what is common to all these cases of conversion? This: that the characters become religious, not when healthy, but when diseased; the religion in every case is exhibited as a drug for the sick, not as wholesome food for the healthy. While you are sane, well and hearty, doing your work in the world deftly, sound in mind, and wind, and limb, and fairly prosperous, you have no need of this religion--you can get through the world very well without it. But when your fortune is lost, your sweetheart dead or married to another, your courage cowed, your heart broken, your mind diseased, your self-respect humiliated, then you long for and embrace Christianity (or whatever religion is dominant around you): it is a soft pillow for the aching head, a tender couch for the bruised body, a flattering nurse for the desolate invalid. I can scarcely add that it is a medicine for the sickness, for its medicinal virtues are hardly shown; but it is, at any rate, as we read of its effects in these books, a narcotic and an anodyne for restlessness and

pain. It is a religion to die with, not to live with. All these things, so soothing and beneficial to the invalid, are nauseous and noxious to the healthy.

A man could no more live vigorous life on such religion than he could live vigorous life couched tenderly, pillowed softly, nursed assiduously, and drugged with narcotics and anodyne all the days of his life.

Is the religious world willing to accept this view of religion? It would seem so by the remarkable popularity of these books. This view may be correct or incorrect, wise or foolish; at any rate, it is strangely at variance with the view commonly ascribed to "Muscular Christians," and strangely identical with that which Dr. Newman explicitly avows in the most eloquent pages of his "Apologia." People generally consider "Muscular Christianity" as a clever and cheerful improvement on the old solemn ascetic Christianity, as a doctrine which fully recognises the goodness of the common world and common worldly life, as a liberal cultus which does not sacrifice body to soul any more than soul to body, but is at once gymnastic and spiritualistic in its "exercises"; a vague notion is abroad that, whereas the early religion of Christ and his apostles was of sorrow and suffering, this, its latest development, is a religion of happiness and health; in short, it is believed that "Muscular Christianity" has added the Gospel(1) of the body and this life to the primitive Gospel of the soul and the next life: and yet the most popular and vigorous writer of this new school, after exhausting a very fertile imagination in the suggestion of methods and modes by which godless sinners may be converted to godliness, has absolutely found no other process effectual than this of showering upon them misfortunes, humiliations, afflictions, calamities (such as do not in real life fall upon one human being in a thousand, and working results such as they would not work in one real human being out of ten thousand); until health and hope, self-respect and the capacity for sane joy are altogether destroyed in them, the manhood and womanhood overwhelmed and crushed out of them; after which he brings in these miserable wrecks and relics of what were once men and women as all that he can contribute to the extension of the Church, which ought to be the cheerful congregation of wholesome men and women throughout the world, the richest flower and ripest fruit of humanity. If the Church of the future is to be composed of creatures like Mr. Kingsley's Convertites, Westminster Abbey must be turned into a Grand Chartreuse, and St. Paul's into an Hospital for Incurables, and the metropolitan Cathedral of England must be Bedlam.

> 1. The Gospel of the body and this life has been powerfully preached in the most explicit terms on the Continent. In England we have been too prudish to advocate it so clearly, although it is, of course, essential to the most enlightened Positivism and Secularism. That much-abused book the "Elements of Social Science" preaches it with more thoroughness, knowledge and ability than any other English work I have met with. I do not pretend to be wise enough to judge this book, and so far as I can judge it, I differ from it in many respects; but on the broad question of the spirit in which it is written, I do not fear to assert that no honest and intelligent man can find pruriency and impurity in it, without he brings the pruriency and impurity in his own heart and mind to the study of it. I can understand ascetic Christians abhorring it, I can understand timid Freethinkers being frightened by it because they are timid; but I cannot understand men who claim to be bold and honest Freethinkers avoiding it as an unholy thing merely because of the subjects it treats, without reference to the mode of treatment, and without sympathy for the admirable motives which manifestly incited the author. He may well say with the most brilliant and daring of all who have preached this Gospel

of the body in our age (this Gospel which is so sorely needed to complement and modify the exclusive Gospel of the soul--this Gospel which Plato preached along with the other, while Jesus preached the other only), he may well say with Heine

Doch die Castraten Klagten,
Aïs ich meine Stimm' erhob;
Sie Klagten und sie sagten;
Ich sange veil zu grob.

THE PRIMATE ON THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

(1876.)

The Archbishop of Canterbury is making his second quadrennial visitation to his diocese, and delivering an elaborate Charge to the clergy, in seven instalments. Of these the first two are reported at considerable length in the _Times_ of the 27th and 28th inst., a couple of columns of small print being given to each. The _Times_ has moreover generously vouchsafed a leading article of encouragement and approval on each; and surely the State Church ought to be proud of such lofty patronage, and Lambeth Palace ought to be very grateful to Printing House Square. The _Daily News_ could only spare half a column for the first; and the _Daily Telegraph_, whose exuberant Christianity, hot and strong as boiling rancid oil, amazes the world on every great festival of the Church, showed its estimate of the importance of our Primate's manifesto by allotting to it eight or nine lines of small print at the foot of a column--a pickpocket in a police-court gets as much notice.

Let us glance down the _Times_' reports, pausing at anything worth a note if not by its intrinsic value yet on account of the position of the speaker:--

"I wish to set before you some thoughts as to the particular duties, which at this time devolve upon the Established Church as the National Church of this country. In the days in which we live some even hesitate to assign to us the position of a National Church. A National Church is a national protest for God and for Christ, for goodness and for truth; and if we of this National Church are not making this national protest, no one else certainly makes one. No other body in this country can claim that commanding influence over the thought of the age, which by God's blessing is assigned to us. No other religious body in the country has either that connection with the State, or if that be thought a small matter, that power of influencing the whole nation which, thank God, is still reserved to us."

It will be noticed that the Archbishop in his definition of a National Church has humbly copied the unorthodox Matthew Arnold, who in his address to London clergymen at Sion College, (reviewed in the _Secularist_ of April 8) declared with an exquisitely humorous gravity that he regarded the Church of England as _a great national society for the promotion of goodness!_ But the Archbishop is really too loose in his imitation of this charitable definition bestowed by a man of letters. He says: "A National Church is a national protest for God and for Christ;" according to which, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism, as the national churches of several countries, are so many national protests for God and Christ. We do not expect a mere Primate in these days to write with the precision of an accomplished literary man, but we do think that he ought to be somewhat less inaccurate than this. However, it is to the last two sentences quoted that I would

particularly call attention. The Church of England has a commanding influence over the thought of the age! It has the power of influencing the whole nation! Here be truly astonishing announcements. The thought of the age in our country is embodied in such persons as Spencer and Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall, Carlyle and Browning, George Eliot and George Meredith; and what a commanding influence the State Church has over these! As for its influence over the whole nation, is it not the fact that a large portion of the educated classes, and the great bulk 01 the artisans, are either sceptical or indifferent, and that more than a half of the shopkeepers are Nonconformists bent on Disestablishment and Disendowment? The Archbishop has made a most unlucky start.

Passing over some commonplace and common-sense remarks on the duties of the clergy, we come to the following:--

"This is an age in which there is a great deal of uneasy thought seething throughout the nation. It is a time when, more than any other, serious and earnest learning is required to meet the wants of those among whom we live. Let us be thankful that the arrangements of cathedral bodies do provide quiet places where men may follow a studious course, and cause their light to be seen throughout the land, guiding the thought of those who are in need of guidance in this anxious age."

Admitting the truth of the opening sentences we may add that in every age since the supremacy of the Church was first shaken by the invention of printing, the recovery of the Greek and Latin classics, and the revival of science, there has been a great deal of uneasy thought seething throughout this nation and every other nation in Christendom, and that age by age this seething has scalded more and more pitilessly the dogmas, the Scriptures, and the authority of the Church, whose Hebrew old clothes, as Carlyle fitly calls them, must soon be literally boiled to rags. We may also freely admit that the arrangements of Cathedral bodies do provide quiet places where men may follow a studious course; but we ask, how many of them really pursue it? How many of them cause their light to shine throughout the land? How many guide the thought of those who need guidance in this anxious age? Is it not as notorious as it is disgraceful to the Church, that, with few exceptions, the canons and other dignitaries make scarcely any contribution to the thought, or scholarship, or science of the age, in return for the large leisure and ample stipends with which they are endowed? These stalled canons may ruminate much, even like stalled oxen, but what nourishment do we get from the rumination of the former? Look through lists of standard works, of really important works, published during the last quarter of a century, and see how few of them, even in theology and kindred departments, have come from the "learned leasure" of our rich cathedrals.

If there is one thing more closely connected than any other with true religion, that thing is money. Always the most spiritual exhortations and speculations end in very practical appeals to the pockets--of course the pockets of the laity. We are reminded what Paul Louis Courier said of the clergy in his day: "They have need of good examples and will find them amongst us. But if we are stronger than they as to the commandments of God, they in their turn have the advantage of us in respect to the commandments of the Church, which they remember better than we, and of which the principal is, I believe, to give all we have for heaven. 'You ask me,' said that worthy preacher Barlette, 'how to get to Paradise? The bells of the convent tell you: Giving, giving, giving,' The Latin of the monk is charming: "Vos quoeritis a me, fratres carissimi, quomodo itur ad paradisupi? Hoc dicunt vobis campance monasterii, dando, dando, dando" Very early in his discourse does our Primate ring this favorite chime of all church bells, but with a noble disinterestedness, a magnanimous depreciation:--

"We may think lightly of the vast sums of money which of late years have been poured into the treasury of the Established Church for the re-edification of our buildings; we may think lightly even of the vast sums which have been contributed by the members of our Church for the instruction of our poorer brethren, thinking that, after all, it is not the silver and the gold, but the precious doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the purity and holiness which attend the true profession of that doctrine on which we have to rest our claims. But still even the outward signs of the influence which God has given us are not to be despised."

"We may think lightly of the vast sums of money!" we, the archbishop with £15,000 a year and a palace rent-free, and the members of the Cathedral body of Canterbury each with our several hundreds a year and our snug residences! Very lightly, no doubt! But "still even the outward signs of the influence which God has given us are not to be despised." How unworldly, how humble, is our right reverend father in God; it is a pity that his voice here has such a twang of Pecksniff and Uriah Heap. I really believe that he is too much of a gentleman to speak in this tone with his natural voice; it is that fatal falsetto of the pulpit. Well, in sober truth, these Churchmen had better not despise the outward signs of their influence, for there is an abundant lack of inward ones. And discreetly do they boast of the re-edification of their buildings, for edification or re-edification of their congregations, alas, there is little or none whereof to boast. Having rang this preliminary diffident chime of Dando dando, dando, the Archbishop revels in riotous peals to the same words before concluding:--

"Depend upon it a country that produces in a short time £30,000,000 [sic in _Times; Daily News_, 'three millions'] to restore the outward fabric of our churches, will not fail to respond to any appeal when made for the funds which may be wanted to assist those who otherwise cannot provide themselves with a due education that they may be fitted for the ministry. Another matter which I think presses upon us is this. Is it not desirable something should be done to provide the means of passing their last days in comfort, for those worn out in the service of Christ? Here again I feel confident that an appeal to the wealthy of this country would be answered at once if those who have the leisure--none more fit than the dignitaries of our cathedral churches--were to take up this question, and to our existing charities might well be added some means of supplementing the resources and meeting the wants of the poorer clergy. I visited yesterday the Clergy Orphan School. I was informed that that school was perfectly full--more full than it had ever been before--and still there were twice as many applicants for admission as there were places to admit them to. Does not this show it is very desirable we should all of us direct our efforts to see that the charity of our fellow-Churchmen should be appealed to, to assist in the education of the orphan children of our clergy, and not only the orphan children?"

Our fellow Christians, the laymen, having laid for us three million golden eggs in a short time (the lavish geese!) will not fail to give us more to educate young men for the ministry; and more yet to pension our worn-out clergy; and more yet again to educate the children, orphan and not orphan, of our clergy. We archbishop and bishops, dean and chapter, are so poor, so poor, so very very poor, that we can do nothing at all for any of these miserable clerical critters; the whole revenues of our State Church are so insignificant that they are quite inadequate to provide decently for its ministers! But we know well that our dear, good, stupid, unedified lay brethren and sisters will give all the out-door relief we have the impudence to ask; will educate our young and pension our old; marching ever briskly heavenwards to that cheerfulest church chime: Giving, giving, giving; Dando, dando, dando! Does not our Archbishop rival or outrival that worthy preaching monk, Barlette? Here

I must pause, but shall have to return again to the Charge, which threatens to be a heavy charge indeed to the purses of the richer and more foolish members of our impoverished State Church.

SPIRITISM IN THE POLICE COURT

(1876.)

We have just had a couple of professional "mediums" in the police courts, and it is to be heartily hoped that all their colleagues of any notoriety will soon be submitted to the same searching test, and duly rewarded according to their merits. At Huddersfield the Rev. Francis Ward Monck, formerly a minister at Bristol, was cleverly caught out by Mr. Lodge, a woollen merchant and amateur conjurer, who at the close of a private seance offered to do all the "Doctor" had done, and insisted on seeing his "paraphernalia." The Doctor protested with profuse virtuous indignation, but his detecter was firm. At length this reverend medium took refuge in his own bedroom and locked himself in, and while the profane sceptics were besieging the door he managed to escape from the window by the help of a sheet. In his sore haste he left behind him some of the "paraphernalia," whose existence he had so indignantly denied, including "spirit hands" and prepared musical boxes. He took out a warrant against Mr. Lodge for the recovery of these precious articles, and was met by a counter-warrant issued by the chief constable under the Vagrant Act, for using subtle craft means and devices to deceive and impose on certain of her Majesty's subjects; he being charged with thus defrauding one person of £20, while Mr. Heppleston, a general dealer, in whose house the exposure took place, had paid him £4 for two séances, the prisoner assuring him that the manifestations were genuine, and were produced by spiritual agency. The prisoner's solicitor said that the Vagrant Act did not apply to a gentleman in the position of Dr. Monck, who kept his carriage and yacht at Bristol. We may admit that the application of the Vagrant Act is an awkward and round-about mode of dealing with such cases, and the sooner Parliament in its great wisdom provides a more direct and effectual remedy, the better; nor could a stronger argument for its provisions be adduced than the fact, if fact it be, that this reverend medium by the illicit production of spirits very much below proof, has been getting money enough to keep a carriage and yacht. When the Huddersfield magistrates remanded him for a week at the request of the chief constable, offering to accept bail, himself in £250, and two sureties in £100 each, the bail was not forthcoming; and the prisoner made a high-minded and pathetic appeal to the bench, "asking them not to make him suffer the indignity of incarceration in the police-cells; he said he had forsaken everything to follow this calling, believing in his inmost soul that it was right." So far as I can see, a convicted burglar or manufacturer of counterfeit coin, might with as good reason make just such an appeal; pleading pathetically that he had forsaken everything to follow this calling, affirming nobly that he believed in his inmost soul that it was right; while as to the jemmy and the skeleton keys, or the moulds and the battery, which had been seized in his possession, they were manifestly for purely scientific experimental investigations--exactly as were the spirit-hands affixed to wires and the musical boxes of the Rev. "Doctor" Monck.

The London case of "Doctor" Slade, is too well known to require being detailed here. As his fee was a sovereign, well-off people having much time to kill with any excitement, and empty heads to fill with any nonsense (much the same sort of silly people as those for whom some West-end High Church is the half-way house to the Pro-Cathedral), must have been his most numerous visitors. Thus Society with a capital S took

great interest in him, and our penny daily press, always ready to pander to Society, and to the snobbery of its readers who are not in Society but ever on their knees worshipping it--our penny daily press furnished full reports of the proceedings. Mr. Flowers, the magistrate at Bow Street Police Court gave a written judgment on the case, sentencing the "Doctor" to three months' imprisonment with hard labor in the House of Correction; which sentence to the credit of our common sense, sadly discredited by much that came out on the trial, was received with some applause, and Mr. Lewis the prosecuting solicitor was cheered by a large crowd on leaving the court. Of course, there being money to back the "medium," notice of appeal was given, and bail accepted--the defendant in £200, and two sureties of £100 each.

In the course of the defence there was read from the _Spiritualist_ an account of a sitting with Slade by Mr. Serjeant Cox, who, as Mr. Flowers observed, would, if an appeal were raised, be one of the judges of that appeal. The said account, after relating various wonders, concludes thus: "I offer no opinion on the causes of the phenomena, for I have formed none. If they be genuine, it is impossible to exaggerate their interest and importance. If they be an imposture it is equally important that the trick should be exposed in the only way in which trickery can be explained--by doing the same thing, and showing how it is done." Now this, at any rate, seems to show judicial fairness if not judicial sagacity; and is beyond blame, as having been written before the learned Serjeant (unless warned by the spirits) could have had any expectation of being called upon to deliver a legal judgment on the matter. But after Mr. Flowers had passed sentence, and the appeal had been raised, this same Serjeant Cox, having become a prospective judge of the case, opened the third session of the Psychological Society of Great Britain, whereof he is president, and which, under such a president, will doubtless do a vast deal for the science of psychology. According to the report of the _Standard_ of Friday the 3rd inst., much of the address of this admirable judge and philosophical president "was an indictment of materialist scientists for their attitude towards psycho-logy, and on this point he said the most important event of the year in relation to psychology had been the recent prosecution. Of the true motive for that proceeding there could be no doubt. The pretence of public interests was transparent." To a mere layman the words of this judicial Serjeant read very much like a reckless libel. Perhaps only a lawyer can properly appreciate them. "The object really sought was plain enough. It was not to punish Dr. Slade, but to discredit through him all psychological phenomena, the proof of whose existence was destruction to the doctrines of materialism.... Whether Dr. Slade was or was not guilty, the trial had had the unlooked-for effect [!] of directing the attention of the whole public to the fact that phenomena were asserted to exist... which swept away now and for ever _the dark and debasing doctrines of the materialists_." After which, according to the same report, a Mr. Dunlop, with admirable gravity, whether sincere or ironical, expressed a high opinion of the judicial mind of the president! and said that he felt sure that if the appeal in the Slade case came before Mr. Serjeant Cox, he would give as dispassionate a decision as if he had had no previous knowledge of the circumstances!! For myself, as a mere unlearned layman, I can only ask in astonishment, Is this Serjeant Cox, with his indecent partizanship and wild personal imputations, fit to sit in judgment--I will not say on this Slade business--but on any case at all which requires impartiality and discretion?

"The dark and debasing doctrines of the materialists"! Can anything be darker and more debasing in a so-called civilised time and country than this Spiritism has proved itself from the beginning until bow? I have yet to learn that the whole of its world of spirits, now for many years at the beck and call of countless mediums, professional and private, has ever dictated or written a single great sentence, revealed a single great truth--discovered a single important fact. Nothing but the

dreamiest drivel, or delirium, the most wretched and imbecile juggling tricks, with all sorts of evasions, and deceptions and lies! Mr. Wallace himself, one of the few good men it has got hold of by some weak place in their minds, in his evidence for Slade said "that he attached no importance to the subject-matter of a message, but only to its being written intelligibly, the subject-matter seldom being of any value." And for seldom he might fairly have said never. The truth is the truth, whether dark or bright, debasing or ennobling; but if we are called upon to consider a theory in these aspects, what, I ask again, can be more dark and debasing than this, that we live after death to rap and turn tables, play villainous snatches on light musical instruments, write badly-spelt balderdash, dictate ungrammatical imbecilities or lies, grasp hands and jog knees--all for the profit of showmen and the hysterical wonder of fools? Who would not prefer annihilation to such a degraded and idiotic immortality? Shakespeare, Bacon, Byron, Shelley, and countless others who on earth were splendid geniuses, have been called from their spheres by knaves or dupes, for what?--to show themselves reduced to the hideous state of Swift's Struldbrugs. The only famous character I have heard of, not intellectually degraded since death, was Bucephalus (see _Secularist_, number 40), who told the company that he still took great interest in literary pursuits, particularly in connection with education; Bucephalus, whose name doubtless suggested an ancient philosopher to the shrewd medium, having been the war-horse of Alexander the Great!

We are compelled to accuse the religion which has been so long dominant among us, of fostering the state of mind which welcomes these miserable marvels instead of rejecting them with scorn. The Bible with its Witch of Endor, its recognition of witchcraft, its magicians, its angels releasing the Apostles, its doctrines of the supernatural, its abounding miracles, has saturated the people with superstitiousness, whose evil effects Science can but slowly counteract. And of those who have ceased to submit themselves to the Bible, the larger number are still infected with its non-natural spirit; having renounced one set of irrational marvels, they yearn more or less consciously for another to replace it. In this connection, the point on which Mr. Flower's judgment turned is very significant, and its significance is increased by the approval of our most Christian press: "_I must decide according to the well-known course of nature._" This is exactly what Science demands. Carry out honestly and thoroughly the application of this rule to the miracles of the Bible, from the speaking serpent, to the birth, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and what sentence must be passed upon them? The Bow Street Magistrate has given us a really excellent, concise, practical maxim of rethought. When a Christian comes with his supernatural dogmas and non-natural occurrences, one has but to answer on the judicial authority of Mr. Flowers: "I must decide according to the well-known course of nature."

A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON ROYALTY

(1876.)

The subjects for our solemn consideration are the seclusion of her Most Gracious Majesty, and the complaints thereanent published in several respectable journals. In order to investigate the matter thoroughly, we constituted ourselves (the unknown number x) into a special Commission of Inquiry. We are happy to state that the said Commission has concluded its arduous labors, and now presents its report within a week of its appointment; surely the most prompt and rapid of commissions. The cause of this celerity we take to be the fact that the Commissioners were

unsalaried; we being unanimously of opinion that had we received good pay for the inquiry throughout the period of our session, we could have prolonged it with certain benefit, if not to the public yet to ourselves, for a great number of years. If, therefore, you want a Commission to do its work rapidly vote no money for it. And do not fear that the most headlong haste in gathering evidence and composing the report will diminish the value of such report; for when a Commission has lasted for years or months it generally rises in a quite different state of the subject matter from that in which it first sat, and the report must be partly obsolete, partly a jumble of anachronisms. In brief, it may be fairly affirmed as a general rule that no Commission of Inquiry is of any value at all; the appointment of one being merely a dodge by which people who don't want to act on what they and everybody else see quite well with their naked eyes, set a number of elderly gentlemen to pore upon it with spectacles and magnifying glasses until dazed and stupid with poring, in the hope that this process will last so long that ere it is finished the public will have forgotten the matter altogether. And now for the result of our inquiries on this subject, which is not only immensely important, but is even sacred to our loyal hearts.

A West-end tradesman complains bitterly that through the absence of the Court from Buckingham Palace, and the diminished number and splendor of royal pomps and entertainments, the "Season" is for him a very poor season indeed. The Commissioners, find that the said tradesman (whose knowledge seems-limited to a knowledge of his business, supposing he knows that) is remarkably well off; and consider that West-end tradesmen have no valid vested interest in Royalty and the Civil List, that at the worst they do-a capital trade with the aristocracy and wealthy classes (taking good care that the punctual and honest shall amply overpay their losses by the unpunctual and dishonest); that if they are not satisfied with the West-end, they had better try the East-end, and see how that will suit them; and, in short, that this tradesman is not worth listening to.

Numerous fashionable and noble people (principally ladies) complain that they have no Court to shine, in. The Commissioners think that they shine a great deal too much already, and in the most wasteful manner, gathered together by hundreds, light glittering on light; and that if they really want to shine beneficially in a court there are very many very dark courts in London where the light of their presence would be most welcome.

It is complained on behalf of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales that they have to perform many of the duties of royalty without getting a share of the royal allowance. The Commissioners think that if the necessary expenses of the heir to the throne are really too heavy for his modest, income, and are increased by the performance of royal duties, he had better send in yearly a bill to his Mamma for expenses incurred on her account, and a duplicate of the same to the Chancellor to the Exchequer; so that in every Budget the amount of the Civil List shall be equitably divided between her Majesty and her Majesty's eldest son, doubtless to their common satisfaction.

It is complained on behalf of various foreign royal or ruling personages that while they in their homes treat generously the visiting members of our royal family, they are treated very shabbily when visiting here. The Commissioners think that Buckingham Palace, being seldom or never wanted by the Queen, and very seldom wanted for the reception of the English Court, should be at all times open for such royal or ruling visitors; that a Lord Chamberlain, or other such noble domestic servant should be detailed to attend on them, and see to their hospitable treatment in all respects; and that to cover the expenditure on their account a fair deduction should be made from her Majesty's share of the Civil List, which deduction, being equitable her Majesty would no doubt view with

extreme pleasure.

It is complained on the part of her Majesty's. Ministers, that when they want the royal assent and signature to important Acts of Parliament, they have to lose a day or two and undergo great fatigue (which is peculiarly hard on men who are mostly aged, and all overworked) in travelling to and from Osborne or Balmoral. The Commissioners think the remedy plain and easy, as in the two preceding cases. Let a law be passed assuming that absence, like silence, gives, consent; so that whenever her Majesty is not in town, the Speaker of the Commons or the Lord Chancellor, or other great officer of State, be empowered to seal and sign in her name, and generally to perform any of her real and royal duties, on the formal demand of the Ministry, who always (and not the Queen) are responsible to Parliament and the country for all public acts.

A taxpayer complains that for fourteen years her Majesty has been punctually drawing all moneys allotted to support the royal dignity, while studiously abstaining from all, or nearly all, the hospitalities and other expensive functions incident to the support of the said dignity. The Commissioners consider that her Majesty is perchance benefiting the country more (and may be well aware of the fact) by taking her money for doing nothing than if she did something for it; that if she didn't take the said money, somebody else would (as for instance, were she to abdicate, the Prince of Wales, become King, would want and get at least as much); so that while our Government remains as it is, the complaint of the said taxpayer is foolish.

Another Taxpayer, who must be a most mean-minded fellow, a stranger to all sacred sympathies and hallowed emotions, says: "If a washerwoman, being stupified by the death of her husband, neglected her business for more than a week or two, she would certainly lose her custom or employment, and not all the sanctity of conjugal grief (about which reverential journalists gush) would make people go on paying her for doing nothing; and if this washerwoman had money enough of her own to live on comfortably, people would call her shameless and miserly if she asked for or accepted payment while doing nothing; and if this washerwoman had a large family of boys and girls around her, and shut herself up to brood upon her husband's death for even three or four months, people would reckon her mad with selfish misery. The Commissioners (as soon as they recover from the stupefaction of horror into which this blasphemy has thrown them) consider and reply that there can be no proper comparison of a Queen and a washerwoman, and that nobody would think of instituting one, except a brute, a Republican, an Atheist, a Communist, a, fiend in human form; that anyhow if, as this wretch says, a washerwoman would be paid for a week or two without working, in consideration of her conjugal affliction, it is plain that a Queen, who (it will be universally allowed) is at least a hundred thousand times as good as a washerwoman, is therefore entitled to at least a hundred thousand times the "week or two" of salary without performance of duty--that is, to at least 1,923 or 3,846 years, whereas this heartless and ribald reprobate himself only complains that our beloved Sovereign has done nothing for her wage throughout "fourteen years." The Commissioners therefore eject this complainant with ineffable scorn; and only wish they knew his name and address, that they might denounce him for prosecution to the Attorney-General.

A Malthusian (whatever kind of creature that may be) complains that her Majesty has set an example of uncontrolled fecundity to the nation and the royal family, which, besides being generally immoral, is likely, at the modest estimate of £6,000 per annum per royal baby, to lead to the utter ruin of the realm in a few generations. The Commissioners, after profound and prolonged consideration, can only remark that they do not understand the complaint any better than the name (which they do not

understand at all) of the "Malthusian;" that they have always been led to believe that a large family is a great honor to a legitimately united man and woman; and that, finally, they beg to refer the Malthusian to the late Prince Consort.

A devotedly loyal Royalist (who unfortunately does not give the name and address of his curator) complains that her Majesty, by doing nothing except receive her Civil List, is teaching the country that it can get on quite as well without a monarch as with one, and might therefore just as well, and indeed very much better, put the amount of the Civil List into its own pocket and call itself a Republic. The Commissioners remark that this person seems the most rational of the whole lot of complainants (most rational, not for his loyalty, but most rational as to the grounds of his complaint, from his own point of view; in accordance with the dictum, "A madman reasons rightly from wrong premises; a fool wrongly from right ones,") and that his surmise is very probably correct--namely, that her Majesty is really a Republican in principle, but not liking (as is perfectly natural in her position) to publicly profess and advocate opinions so opposed to the worldly interests of all her friends and relatives, has been content to further these opinions practically for fourteen years past by her conduct, without saying a word on the subject. The Commissioners, however, find one serious objection to this surmise in the fact that if her Majesty is really a Republican at heart, she must wish to exclude the Prince of Wales from the Throne; while it seems to them that the intimate knowledge she must have of his wisdom and virtues (not to speak of her motherly affection) cannot but make her feel that no greater blessing could come to the nation after her death than his reigning over it. As this is the only complaint which the Commissioners find at once well-founded and not easy to remedy, they are happy to know that it is confined to the very insignificant class of persons who are "devotedly loyal Royalists."

The Commissioners thus feel themselves bound to report that all the complaints they have heard against our beloved and gracious Sovereign (except the one last cited, which is of no importance) are without foundation, or frivolous, or easily remedied, and that our beloved and gracious Sovereign (whom may Heaven long preserve!) could not do better than she is now doing, in doing nothing.

But in order to obviate such complaints, which do much harm, whether ill or well founded, and which especially pain the delicate susceptibilities of all respectable men and women, the Commissioners have thought it their duty to draw up the following project of a Constitution, not to come into force until the death of our present beloved and gracious Sovereign (which may God, if so it please Him, long avert!), and to be modified in its details according to the best wisdom of our national House of Palaver.

Draft

Whereas it is treasonable to talk of dethroning a monarch, but there can be no disloyalty in preventing a person not yet a monarch from becoming one:

And whereas it is considered by very many, and seems proved by the experience of the last ---- years that the country can do quite well without a monarch, and may therefore save the extra expense of monarchy:

And whereas it is calculated that from the accession of George I. of

blessed memory until the decease of the most beloved of Queens, Victoria, a period of upwards of a century and a half, the Royal Family of the House of Guelph have received full and fair payment in every respect for their generous and heroic conduct in coming to occupy the throne and other high places of this kingdom, and in saving us from the unconstitutional Stuarts:

And whereas the said Stuarts may now be considered extinct, and thus no longer dangerous to this realm: And whereas the said Royal Family of the House of Guelph is so prolific that the nation cannot hope to support all the members thereof for a long period to come in a royal manner:

And whereas the Dukes of this realm are accounted liberal and courteous gentlemen:

And whereas the constitution of our country is so far Venetian that it cannot but be improved in harmony and consistency by being made more Venetian still:

Be it enacted, etc., That the Throne now vacant through the ever-to-be-deplored death of her late most gracious Majesty shall remain vacant. That the mem-ers of what has been hitherto the Royal Family keep all the property they have accumulated, the nation resuming from them all grants of sinecures and other salaried appointments. That no member of the said Family be eligible for any public appointment whatever for at least one hundred years. That the Dukes in the order of their seniority shall act as Doges (with whatever title be considered the best) year and year about, under penalty of large fines in cases of refusal, save when such refusal is supported by clear proof of poverty (being revenue under a settled minimum), imbecility, brutality, or other serious disqualification. That no members of a ducal family within a certain degree of relationship to the head of the house be eligible for any public appointment whatever; the head of the house being eligible for the Dogeship only. That the duties of the Doge be simply to seal and sign Acts of Parliament, proclamations, etc., when requested to do so by the Ministry; and to exercise hospitality to royal or ruling and other representatives of foreign countries, as well as to distinguished natives. That a fair and even excessive allowance be made to the Doge for the expenses of his year of office. That the royal palaces be official residences of the Doge. That the Doge be free from all political responsibility as from all political power; but be responsible for performing liberally and courteously the duties of hospitality, so that Buckingham Palace shall not contrast painfully with the Mansion House. Etc., etc.

God preserve the Doge!

The Commission of Inquiry having thus triumphantly vindicated our beloved and gracious Sovereign against the cruel aspersions of people in general, and having moreover drafted a plan for obviating such aspersions against any British King or Queen in future, ends its Report, and dissolves itself, with humble thankfulness to God Almighty whose grace alone has empowered it to conclude its arduous labors so speedily, and with results so incalculably beneficial.

P. S.--Since the above report was drawn up, that ardent English patriot and loyalist, Benjamin Disraeli, being by the grace of God and the late Earl of Derby Prime Minister of this realm, has proposed that Parliament shall enable her Most Gracious Majesty to assume the additional title of Empress of India, and Parliament has so far humbly assented. Being sore pressed by many cantankerous persons to give valid reasons for this change, he has given reasons many and weighty; such as the earnest desire of the princes and people of India, which desire has been so abundantly expressed that the expressions thereof cannot be produced

lest they should overwhelm Parliament and destroy the balance of the world in general; then the imposing authority of "Whitaker's Almanack," a dissenting minister and a school-girl aged twelve: and lastly the necessity of such a title for scaring all the Russias from India. But I believe that in deference to the well-known modesty of her Most Gracious Majesty he has not produced the most cogent reason of all, which is that for her wonderful and continual goodness during the past fourteen years in abstaining from the active functions of royalty, thus not only doing no mischief but preparing us for a Republic de jure by habituating us to a Republic _de facto_, she merits a great reward; and that, as she has already more money than she knows what to do with, this reward of royal virtue can most fittingly be rendered by her grateful subjects promoting her to the rank of Empress. And it should be noted that whereas the old title of Queen has a certain strength and stability in the habitudes if not in the affections of the people, the new fangled title of Empress has no such support, so that in assuming it our beloved monarch is but working consistently and resolutely toward the great end of her reign, the speedy abolition of monarchy and establishment of a Republic.

A BIBLE LESSON ON MONARCHY

(1876.)

The old theory of "The right divine of kings to govern wrong," and the much-quoted text, "Fear God and honor the king," seem to have impressed many good people with the notion that the Bible is in favor of monarchy. But "king" in the text plainly has the general meaning of "ruler," and would be equally applicable to the President of a Republic. In Romans xiii. 1--3, we read: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." Without stopping to discuss the bold assertion in the last sentence, we may remark that the real teaching of this passage is that Christians ought to be indifferent to politics, quietly accepting whatever government they find in power; for if the powers that be are ordained of God, or in other words, if might is right, all forms of government are equally entitled to obedience so long as they actually exist. Of course Christians are not now, and for the most part have not been for centuries, really indifferent to politics, because for the most part they now are and long have been Christians only in name; but it is easy to understand from the New Testament itself why the first Christians naturally were thus indifferent, and why Christianity has never afforded any political inspiration. Nothing can be clearer to one who reads the New Testament honestly and without prejudice than the fact that Christ and his apostles believed that the end of the world was at hand. Thus in Matt, xxiv., Jesus after foretelling the coming to judgment of the son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, when the angels shall gather the elect from the four winds, adds, v. 34, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." This is repeated in almost the same words in Mark xiii., and Luke xxi., and a careful reading of the Epistles shows that their writers were profoundly influenced by this prophecy. But with the world coming to an end so soon, it would be as absurd to take any interest in its politics as for a traveller stopping two or three days in an inn to concern himself self with schemes for rebuilding it, when about to leave for a far country where he intends settling for life. If therefore we want any political guidance from the Holy Scriptures, we must go to the Old Testament, not to the New.

Now the first lesson on Monarchy, which we remember made us think even in childhood, is the fable of the trees electing a king, told by Jotham, the son of Gideon, in Judges ix. The trees in the process of this election showed a judgment much superior to that which men usually show in such a business. It is true that they did not select first the most strong and stalwart of trees, the cedar or the oak, but they had the good sense to choose the most sweet-natured and bountiful, the olive, then the fig, then the vine. But the bountiful trees thus chosen had good sense too, and would not forsake the fatness and the sweetness and the wine which cheereth God and man, to rule over their fellow trees. Then the poor trees, like a jilted girl who marries in spleen the first scamp she comes across, asked the bramble to be their king; and that barren good-for-nothing of course accepted eagerly the crown which the noble and generous had refused, and called upon the trees to put their trust in its scraggy shadow, "and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Young as we were when this fable first caught our attention, we mused a good deal over it, and even then began to learn that those most eager for supremacy, the most forward candidates in elections, are nearly always brambles, not olives or fig-trees or vines; and that the first thought of a bramble, when made ruler over its betters, is naturally to destroy with fire the cedars of Lebanon.

But God himself in the case of the Israelites has vouchsafed to us a very clear judgment on the question of Monarchy. In the remarkable constitution for that people which he gave to Moses, he did not include a king, and Israel remained without a king for more years than it is worth while endeavoring to count here. We read, 1 Samuel viii., how "All the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Hamah, and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

"... Now therefore hearken unto their voice: how-beit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." Some students of the Bible may have thought that God's severe condemnation of the Israelites for wanting a king arose chiefly from wounded pride, from the fact that they had rejected him, and we cannot affirm that this feeling did not inflame his anger, for he himself has said that he is a jealous God; but the protest which he orders Samuel to make, and the exposition of the common evils of kingship, prove clearly that God did not (and therefore, of course, does not) approve this form of government. And, indeed, it is plain that if he had approved it, he would have given it to his chosen people at first. For although divines have termed the form of government under which the Jews lived before the kings a theocracy, God did not then rule immediately, but always through the medium of a high-priest or judge, and could have governed through the medium of a king had he thought it well so to do. And he who reads the history of the Jews under the Judges, as contained in the Book of Judges, and especially the narratives in chapters xvii. to xxi. which illustrate the condition of Jewish society in those days when "there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes," will see that God must have thought a Monarchy very vile and odious indeed when he was angry at the request for it, and implied that it was actually worse than that government by Judges alternated with bondage under neighboring tribes which the theologians call a theocracy. Samuel warned the people of what a king would do, and doubtless thought he was warning them of the worst, but kings have far outstripped all that the prophet could foresee. The

king, he said, will take your sons to be his warriors and servants; and will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and cooks, and bakers. This was the truth, and nothing but the truth, but it was not the whole truth; for the sons have been taken to be far worse than mere warriors and servants, and the daughters for much viler purposes than cooking and baking. Samuel goes on: "And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants"--when he does not keep them for himself might have been added. "And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants." Surely much more than a tenth, O Samuel! We will not quote the remainder of this wise warning. Like most wise warnings it was ineffectual; the foolish people insisted on having a king, and in the following chapters we read how Saul the Son of Kish, going forth to seek his father's asses, found his own subjects.

The condemnation of Monarchy by God, as we read it in this instance, is so thorough and general that we feel bound to add a few words on an exceptional case in which a king is highly extolled in the Scriptures, without any actions being recorded of him, as in the instances of David and Solomon, to nullify the praise. The king in question was Melchizedek, King of Salem, and priest of the most high God, who met Abram returning from the defeat of the four kings and blessed him, and to whom Abram gave tithes of all, as we read in Genesis xiv. But this short notice of Melchizedek in Genesis does not by any means suggest to us the full wonderfulness of his character, though we naturally conclude from it that he was indeed an important personage to whom Abram gave tithes of all. The New Testament, however, comes to our aid, and for once gives us a most valuable political lesson, though the inspired writer was far from thinking of political instruction when he wrote the passage. In Hebrews vi., 20, and vii., 1 to 3, we read: "Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." Now he to whom Jesus is compared, and who is like the Son of God, is clearly the noblest of characters; and therefore, as the history in the first book of Samuel teaches us that Monarchy is generally to be avoided, these fine verses from the Epistle to the Hebrews delineate for us the exceptional king whose reign is to be desired.

The delineation is quite masterly, for a few lines give us characteristics which cannot be overlooked or mistaken. This model monarch must be a priest of the most high God--a king of righteousness and king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God. Whenever and wherever such a gentleman is met with, we would advise even the most zealous Republicans to put him forthwith upon the throne. But in the absence of such a gentleman we can hardly do wrong if we follow the good advice of Samuel dictated by God Almighty, and manage without any Monarch.

PRINCIPAL TULLOCH ON PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

[two excerpts.]

(1877.)

Dr. Tulloch has the sense to perceive and the candor to acknowledge that even to those who have not any faith in God or Immortality, death need not be terrible, and often is not; that they may be resigned or peaceful, and meet the inevitable with a calm front; that they may be even glad to be done with the struggle of existence. Of course this is no news to us who have stood at the bedside of dying Materialists and Atheists, or are familiar with trustworthy well-authenticated accounts of the last hours of such persons. Still it is encouraging to find a distinguished and influential minister openly recognising the facts, instead of distorting them with the old contemptible pious fictions, again and again repeated after being again and again refuted. But Dr. Tulloch considers that only the light of the higher life in Christ can glorify death. It would have been well had he been more specific as to this higher life and the glory it casts on death. If they are as described at length in the only authoritative Christian Scripture on the subject, the Book of Revelation, it seems to me that the life is anything but high, and radiates anything but glory. However, tastes differ, and man is a queer fellow; and there may actually exist many people who would prefer to annihilation a sort of everlasting Moody and Sankey meeting, and would even regard this as celestial beatitude. Concerning such I will only say with Goethe, I hope I shan't go to heaven with that lot! Yet these are not quite the lowest of the low in our civilised Christendom; or are there not many who look forward with complacency and even enthusiasm to a life beyond death, wherein they shall be largely employed in rapping tables, jogging arms and scrawling illiterate nonsense? Dr. Tulloch, in quoting St. Paul, seems to forget that he was writing of himself and his fellow Christians, to whom his words were thoroughly applicable; not of mankind in general, to whom they were not, and by the construction of the sentence could not be. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable;" we, the Christians. And why would they be of all men the most miserable? Clearly because, in obedience to the injunctions of their Master, they had cut themselves off from this world that they might secure the next; had renounced wealth, honor, society, enjoyment, all interest in art, science, literature, all political and national aspirations, and had courted obloquy and persecution; so that if the next life should turn out to be a mockery, a delusion and a snare, they were of all men the most miserable, being the most miserably deluded. Those poor simple early Christians (on the showing, true or false, of the books all Christians revere as sacred and divine), having only Jesus and his apostles to instruct them, had not reached that lofty mercantile wisdom which made the late Mr. Binney one of the most popular preachers in our pious and mercantile country, when he solved the problem of _How to Make the Best of Both Worlds_. Of other-worldliness they indeed had enough and to spare; but they lacked the large modern grasp which combines and intermingles it with an equal measure of this worldliness. "They didn't know everything down in Judee;" and St. Paul, though fairly intelligent and cultivated for his benighted time, was in a deplorable need of some lessons from Weigh-house Chapel.

When the worthy Principal says that men cannot find strength or comfort in what has been called the Religion of Humanity, and that they crave a personal life, is he aware that he has descended from the highlands of morality and truth to the lowest lowlands of Paley and Binney expediency? Is he aware that he is moreover begging the question, making the monstrous assumption that men must get what they crave? I call this the childish lollipop attraction of religion, so absurd as to be really beneath the contempt of full-grown men and women. Just as young ones would look forward to having the free range as long as they liked (which they would interpret for ever and ever) of shops full of sweeties, so those big babies, our dear simple Christian brethren, look forward to their Lubberland of eternal bliss, in singing Glory! Glory! Glory! Their claim to it is purely the infant's, because they would like it. Their

mouths water, they lick their lips, they gurgle luxuriously with the foretaste: "Oh, we shall be so 'ap-'ap-'appy! Canaan is a happy place; we'll go to the land of Canaan!" And usually these beatific adult babies are creatures such as an intelligent man would be ashamed to bring into the world, much more a God. You can't endure an hour of their society here, and they pester you to come and spend eternity with them! I am really sorry to find Dr. Tulloch in such company.

In conclusion, I ask the reader to note especially the preacher's avowal that his faith in personal immortality has no warrant from Nature, no warrant from Science; nay, more, that the suggestions of scientific analysis "mockingly sift the sources of life only to hint our mortality." There is indeed no temper of mockery in Science, but its soberest deductions may well seem to mock with a terrible derision the inordinate greed and self-conceit of men, who, because they profess an unscientific and unnatural faith, have lost all sense of proportion between their infinitesimal selves and the infinite Universe.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH

Its Real As Distinguished From Its Apparent Strength

(1862.)

In discussions with "Infidels," Churchmen are very ready with the taunt, "You are but a handful of' fanatics. Nearly the whole intellect of the nation is for us and against you." In general the taunt is merely parried by a "What matter, if _we_ are right?" whereas it should also be retorted by a counter-thrust of denial. For, in truth, but a very small part of the intellect of the nation--_i.e._, intellect in the only sense in which it is of importance--_active_ intellect, is devoted to the Establishment or even to the Establishment and the so-called Dissenters combined. If they only are the true soldiers of the Church militant whom she spiritually feeds and equips for the warfare of life, and who are loyal to her with their whole heart and mind, how many legions must be deducted from the armies gathered round her banners before we can fairly estimate her actual power in the field! Should Jesus come to eliminate his true followers from the multitudes of professing Christians, as Gideon selected his, three hundred from the two and thirty thousand Israelites, let us consider whom he would reject.

First, all the cowards and hypocrites who simply cling to what appears the dominant party, and who would therefore call themselves Atheists were Atheism in the ascendant; a vile brood, the incumbrance and disgrace of every cause they adopt; "hateful to God and to the enemies of God"; of whom even to write is not pleasant.

Secondly, the indifferent through lack of vitality; men of tepid heart and inert brain, who are incapable of any strong sane affection. I use the word _sane_ because these creatures have intense self-love, which in its essence is insane; and because also they may be frenzied by the drunkenness of fanaticism, in which state they can die as devotedly as they can murder atrociously. The adhesion of these also I count no gain to any cause.

Thirdly, the indifferent through excess of vitality, including the most eminent "practical" men, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, engineers, statesmen. These, applying their whole energies to their several professions, rarely trouble themselves with theological any more than with other extraneous matters, but passively acquiesce in whatever creed

may be prevalent around them. Their real church is the world; their real worship is labor; and they no more add to the strength of their nominal church than did the _savants_ to that of Napoleon's army in Egypt--those _savants_ whom the wise Napoleon always ordered (with the donkeys) to the centre whenever an attack was expected. To these must be added all the men whom we call fine animals, who enjoy such a red-blooded life in this world that they are not subject to bilious forebodings of another. Some classes of the most famous men--the poets, philosophers, doctors, physicists, mathematicians--are commanded by their very vocations to think seriously on some of the great theological questions, and therefore, whether ranged for or against the Church, count for something. The reader must ask his memory whether their weight in the balance has preponderated for orthodoxy or for heterodoxy. The statesmen I have counted among the indifferent, because their support of religion, in whatever form, has been almost universally no more than political.

Fourthly, the supersubtle, including laymen and divines of first-rate talent; who cannot help delighting in the exercise of their skill of fence, and who instinctively feel that it is much harder to champion any existing institution than to attack it, and naturally (like all unconquerable knights-errant) prefer the most difficult _devoir_. Their adhesion to the Church, therefore, though seeming to strengthen it, really proclaims its weakness. Macaulay tells us how Halifax, the Trimmer, always joined the losing side.

Fifthly, the supremely reverential, including the very best of the laymen and divines; men whose lofty reason is drowned in a yet deeper faith, as mountain-peaks high as the highest in air are said to be submerged in the abysses of the Atlantic. In many cases these might be ranked in the preceding class; for it is a general rule that the more reverence, the more subtlety. They see--how clearly!--the flaws and imperfections of their Church, they even realise the danger of its total fall; but they cannot tear themselves away from the venerable building wherein all their forefathers worshipped, in whose consecrated precincts all their forefathers were buried in hopes of a happy resurrection; whose chants were the rapturous music and whose windows were the heavenly glories of their pure childhood; whose prayers they repeated night after night and morning after morning at their mother's knee. Can they leave this, with all its treasured holiness of antiquity for some new bold glaring erection, wherein men certainly congregate ta talk about God, but which might just as well be used as a warehouse or a manufactory? No; rather than leave it they will believe, they will force themselves to believe, that some miraculous renovation is at hand, or that (as the structure was certainly raised by God) God will uphold it in spite of the law of gravitation. These are the men who keep the Church from falling into insignificance, but they are not essentially hers. It is not she alone whom they could thus worship. Had they been brought up idolators, idolatry must have retained almost the same influence over spirits so reverentially humble, so loving and pure.

And here it may be remarked that one can scarcely conceive a Church so frail and gloomy and even vile, but that a fervent soul and a strong intellect could fortify it with argument, adorn it with the gold and jewels of imagination, illustrate its dark altars and vivify its dead idols with the burning fire of spirituality, until it should be far more noble and mighty and splendid than ever was aspired to by the majority of men. But mark, such men as these of whom I speak do not derive their religiousness from, but really bestow it upon the Church in which they pray. She is subject and indebted to them, not they to her. She does not nourish them, they nourish her. She is the statue, they are Pygmalion. And they are indeed idolators, for they worship a creation of their own souls. Perhaps Pygmalion himself fell down and adored his flushed and breathing statue, thinking her, with artist-reverence, nothing less than a transformation of Venus Urania. When one thinks of certain noble men

and women--as Maurice and Kingsley, Ruskin and the Browning--devoting themselves in spite of themselves to an effete faith, one is sadly reminded of poor Abishag the Shunammite wasting and withering her healthful youth to cherish old worn-out David, "who knew her not," who could fill her with no new life, and who was, despite her cherishing, so certainly near death. He had been a great king in his time, but now his time was past, and as it was now the maiden's spring-time, he should have left her to live her proper life.

But when all these are separated from the host, who are left to whom we may point in answer to Emerson's question, "In Christendom, where is the Christian?" Strictly speaking there has never been but one Christian--the man Christ Jesus. But I would give the title to those who thoroughly believe the Bible after having investigated it to the best of their power, who find its doctrines completely satisfy them, and who sincerely endeavor to act up to those doctrines. How many of such are there? I have known perhaps half a dozen. Has any reader known many more? Will any one dare assert that they are more numerous in England than the equally sincere Secularists or Atheists? I scarcely think any honest and thoughtful person will.

FINIS.

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SATIRES AND PROFANITIES ***

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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BOOK OF GOD ***

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THE BOOK OF GOD

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEAN FARRAR'S NEW APOLOGY

By G. W. Foote

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

THE BOOK OF GOD.

I. INTRODUCTION.

During the fierce controversy between the divines of the Protestant Reformation and those of the Roman Catholic Church, the latter asserted that the former treated the Bible--and treated it quite naturally--as a wax nose, which could be twisted into any shape and direction. Those who championed the living voice of God in the Church, against the dead letter of the written Bible, were always prone to deride the consequences of private judgment when applied to such a large and heterogeneous volume as the Christian Scriptures. They contended that the Bible is a misleading book when read by itself in the mere light of human reason; that any doctrine may be proved from it by a judicious selection of texts; and that Christianity would break up into innumerable sects unless the Church acted as the inspired interpreter of the inspired revelation. They argued, further, that the Bible was really

not what the Protestants supposed it to be; and what they said on this point was a curious anticipation of a good deal of the so-called Higher Criticism.

Both sides were right, and both sides were wrong, in this dispute. The Protestants were right against the Church; the Catholics were right against the Bible. It was reserved for Rationalism to accept and harmonise the double truth, and to wage war against both infallibilities.

The Bible is said to be inspired, but the man who reads it is not. The consequence is that he deduces from it a creed in harmony with his own taste, temper, fancy, and intelligence. He lays emphasis on what fits in with this creed, and slurs over all that is opposed to it. Every one of the various and conflicting Protestant sects is founded upon one and the same infallible book. "The Bible teaches this," says one; "The Bible teaches that," says another. And they are both right. The Bible does teach the doctrines of all the sects. But do they not contradict each other? They do. What is the explanation, then? Why this--the Bible contradicts itself.

The self-contradictions of the Bible have occasioned the writing of many "Harmonies," in which it is sought to be proved that all the apparent discrepancies are most admirable agreements when they are properly understood. All that is requisite is to add a word here, and subtract a word there; to regard one and the same word as having several different meanings, and several different words as having one and the same meaning; and, above all things, to apply this method with a strong and earnest desire to find harmony everywhere, and a pious intention of giving the Bible the benefit of the doubt in every case of perplexity.

This sort of jugglery, which would be derided and despised in the case of any other book, is now falling into discredit. Most of the clergy are ashamed of it. They frankly own, since it can no longer be denied, that a more honest art of criticism is necessary to save the Bible from general contempt.

But the "Harmony" game is not the only one that is played out. All the "Reconciliations" of the Bible with science, history, morality, and common sense, are sharing the same fate. The higher clergy leave such exhibitions of perverted ingenuity to laymen like the late Mr. Gladstone. Divines like Canon Driver see that this mental tight-rope dancing may cause astonishment, but will never produce conviction. They therefore recognise the difficulties, and seek for a more subtle and plausible method of removing them. They admit that Moses and Darwin are at variance with each other; that a great deal of Bible "history" is legendary, and some of it distinctly false; that such stories as those of Lot's wife and Jonah's whale are decidedly incredible; that some passages of Scripture are vulgar and brutal, and others detestably inhuman; and that it is positively useless to disguise the fact. Yet they are naturally anxious to keep the Bible on its old pedestal; and this can only be done by means of a new theory of inspiration. Accordingly, these gentlemen tell us that the Bible is not the Word of God, but it contains the Word of God. Its writers were inspired, but their own natural faculties were not entirely suppressed by the divine spirit. Sometimes the writer's spirit was predominant in the combination, and the composition was mainly that of an unregenerate son of Adam. At other times the divine spirit was predominant, and the result was lofty religion and pure ethics. Moreover, the sacred writers were only inspired in one direction. God gave them a lift, as it were, in spiritual matters; but in science and sociology he let them blunder along as they could.

The old wax nose is now receiving a decided new twist, and a

considerable number of accomplished and clever divines are engaged in manipulating it. One of them is Dean Farrar, who has recently published a bulky volume on _The Bible: its Meaning and Supremacy_, which we shall subject to a very careful criticism.

Dean Farrar's book contains nothing that is new to fairly well-read sceptics. It presents the commonplaces of modern Biblical criticism, with a due regard to the interests of "the grand old book" and of "true" and "fundamental" Christianity, which is probably no more than the particular form of Christianity that is likely to weather the present storm of controversy. But although this book contains no startling novelties, it is of importance as the work of a dignitary of the Church of England. It is also of value, inasmuch as it will be read by many persons who would shrink from Strauss and Thomas Paine. It is well that someone should tell Christians the truth, if not the _whole_ truth, about the Bible, and tell it them from within the fold of faith. His motive in doing so may be less a regard for truth itself than for the immediate interests of his own Church; but the main thing is that he does it, and Freethinkers may be glad even if they are not grateful.

Dr. Farrar's book has an Introduction, and we propose to examine it first. He opens by telling the clergy that they ought not to pursue an "ostrich policy" in regard to religious difficulties; that they should not indulge in "vituperative phrases," nor assume a "disdainful infallibility"; that they do wrong in denouncing as "wicked," "blasphemous," or "dangerous" every conviction which differs from their own form of orthodoxy; and that they must not expect all that they choose to assert to be "accepted with humble acquiescence." No doubt this advice is quite necessary; and the fact that it is so shows the value of Christianity, after eighteen centuries of trial, as a training-school in the virtues of modesty and humility, to say nothing of justice and temperance.

The clergy are also invited by Dr. Farrar to recognise the general diffusion of scepticism:--

"In recent years much has been written under the assumption that Christianity no longer deserves the dignity of a refutation; or that, at any rate, the bases on which it rests have been seriously undermined. The writings of freethinkers are widely disseminated among the working classes. The Church of Christ has lost its hold on multitudes of men in our great cities. Those of the clergy who are working in the crowded centres of English life can hardly be unaware of the extent to which scepticism exists among our artizans. Many of them have been persuaded to believe that the Church is a hostile and organised hypocrisy."

This is a sad state of things, and how is it to be met?

Not by denouncing reason as a wild beast, nor yet by relying on emotion and ceremonial, for "no religious system will be permanent which is not based on the convictions of the intellect." Dr. Farrar recommends a different policy. He has "frequently observed that the objections urged against Christianity are aimed at dogmas which are no part of Christian faith, or are in no wise essential to its integrity." Even men of science have been led astray by objections "based on travesties of its real tenets." One of these false opinions is that "which maintains the supposed inerrancy and supernatural infallibility of every book, sentence, and word of the Holy Bible." This is the principal point to be dealt with; it is here that we must make an adjustment. Nine-tenths of the case of sceptics "is made up of attacks on the Bible," and the only way to answer them is to show that they misunderstand it, and that what they demolish is not Christianity, but "a mummy elaborately painted in its semblance," or "a scarecrow set up in its guise."

"It is no part of the Christian faith," Dr. Farrar says, "to maintain that every word of the Bible was dictated supernaturally, or is equally valuable, or free from all error, or on the loftiest levels of morality, as finally revealed." Such a view of the Bible has been popularly expressed by divines, but they really did not mean it, and it "never formed any part of the Catholic creed of Christendom." The doctrine of everlasting punishment is another of these delusions. There is such a thing as future punishment, but it is not everlasting--it is only eternal. In the same way, the Bible is the Word of God, but it is not infallible--it is only inspired. And what _that_ means we shall see as we proceed.

II. THE BIBLE CANON

The first chapter of Dean Farrar's book deals with the Bible Canon. After another slap at the poor benighted Christians who still hold that every word of Scripture is "supernaturally dictated and infallibly true," Dr. Farrar remarks that the Bible is "not a single nor even a homogeneous book." Strictly speaking, it is not a book, but a library; and, as is pointed out later on, it is the remains of a much larger collection which has mostly perished. The Canon of the Old Testament was "arrived at by slow and uncertain degrees." The common assertion, that it was fixed by Ezra and the so-called Great Synagogue in the fifth century before Christ, is in direct opposition to the facts. It was not really _settled_ until seventy years after the birth of Christ, when the Rabbis met at Jamnia, and decided in favor of our present thirty-nine books. According to Dr. Farrar, there was no special influence from heaven in the determination of the Canon. It was a work which God left to "the _ordinary_ influences of the Holy Ghost." Let us see then how these influences operated on the last and most critical occasion. "The gathering at Jamnia," says Dr. Farrar, "was a tumultuous assemblage, and in the faction fights of the Rabbinic parties blood was shed by their scholars. Hence the decision was regarded as irrevocable and sealed by blood." Such are the _ordinary_ influences of the Holy Ghost. Its _extraordinary_ influences may be easily imagined. Their history is written in blood and fire in every country in Christendom.

Dr. Farrar allows that the Canon of the New Testament was formed "in the same gradual and tentative way." Many Gospels, Epistles, and Apocalypses were "current" in the "first two centuries." Some of them were "quoted as sacred books" and read aloud in Christian churches. Seven, at least, of the books which are now canonical were then "disputed"--namely, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, and the Book of Revelation. The Canon was "formally and officially settled" by the Council of Laodicea (a.d. 363), and the two Councils of Carthage (a.d. 397 and 419), the decrees of which were sanctioned by the Trullian Council (a.d. 692), nearly seven hundred years after Christ. Dr. Farrar holds, however, that these Councils merely registered the general agreement of the Christian Church. The real test of canonicity is not the decision of Councils, which may and do err, but "the verifying faculty of the Christian consciousness." Dr. Farrar's argument, if it means anything at all, implies that while Councils may err, consisting as they do of fallible men, this "Christian consciousness" is really infallible. But as this Christian consciousness only exists, after all, in individual Christians, however numerous they may be, or through however many centuries they may be continued, it is difficult to see how the greatest multitude of fallibilities can make up one infallibility. And unless it can, it is also difficult to see how Dr. Farrar can have an infallible Canon. He disclaims the authority of the Church, on which Catholics rely; indeed, he says it can hardly be said that the "whole

Church" has pronounced any opinion on the Canon at all. What really happened is perhaps unconsciously admitted by Dr. Farrar in a rather simple footnote. "Books were judged," he says, "by the congruity of their contents with the general Christian conviction." Precisely so; the books did not decide the doctrine, but the doctrine decided the fate of the books. And how was the doctrine decided? By fierce controversy, by forgery and sophistication, by partisan struggles, and finally, after the adhesion of Constantine, by faction fights that involved the loss of myriads (some say millions) of lives.

Not the slightest attempt is made by Dr. Farrar to meet the difficulty of his position; indeed, he seems unaware that the difficulty exists. All he sees is the difficulty of the positions taken up by the Catholics and the early Protestants. It never occurs to him that he has only shifted from one difficulty to another. The Catholics rely upon the living voice of God in the Church. That covers everything, like the sky; and is perfectly satisfactory, if you can only accept it. The early Protestants repudiated the authority of the Church, at least as represented by the Pope and Councils; but they acknowledged the authority of the _primitive_ Church. They were shrewd enough to see that what cannot possibly rest on mere reason must rest somewhere on authority; so they admitted as much as was sufficient to cover the Scriptures and the Creeds, and refused to go a step farther. Dr. Farrar breaks away from both parties, and what is the result? He talks about the Canon of the New Testament being formed "by the exercise of enlightened reason," but he lays down no criterion by which reason can decide whether a book is inspired or not, or so specially inspired as to require a place in the Canon. The "verifying faculty of the Christian consciousness" is one of those comfortable phrases, like the blessed word Mesopotamia, which are designed to save the pains of accuracy and the trouble of definite thought. What light does it really shed upon the following questions? Why is the Protestant Canon different from the Catholic Canon? Is it owing to some inexplicable difference in the "verifying faculty of the Christian consciousness" in the two cases; and by what test shall we decide when the Christian consciousness delivers two contradictory verdicts? Why is the book of Ecclesiastes in the Canon, while the book of Ecclesiasticus is (by the Protestants) relegated to the Apocrypha? Why is the book of Esther in the Canon, and the book of Judith in the Apocrypha? Why is the book of Jonah in the Canon, and the book of Tobit in the Apocrypha? Why is the book of Proverbs in the Canon, and the book of the Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha? These are questions which the early Protestants answered in their way, but we defy Dr. Farrar to answer them at all.

Let us follow Dr. Farrar into his second chapter. He states, truly enough, that both the Old and the New Testaments represent "the selected and fragmentary remains of an extensive literature." Many books referred to in the Old Testament are lost. Some of the canonical books are anonymous; we do not know who wrote them. Others bear the names of men "by whom they could not have been composed." The Pentateuch is "a work of composite structure," which has been "edited and re-edited several times." The Psalms are a collection of sacred poems in "five separate books of very various antiquity." The Proverbs consist of "four or five different collections." The New Testament is a selection from the voluminous Christian literature of the earliest centuries. Many Gospels were already in existence when St. Luke prepared his own. "It is all but certain," Dr. Farrar says, "that St. Paul, and probable that the other Apostles, must have written many letters which are no longer preserved." That is to say, some letters actually written by St. Paul were allowed to perish, while others not written by him were allowed to bear his name, and were placed as his in the New Testament Canon! There are passages in the Gospels that are known to be interpolations; for instance, the story of the Woman taken in Adultery. This story is "exquisite and supremely valuable," but it is bracketed in the Revised

Version as of "doubtful genuineness." Such passages are eliminated because they do not "meet the standard of modern critical requirements." _O sancta simplicitas!_ Is there any reason, in the natural sense of that word, for believing that John the Apostle wrote the rest of the Fourth Gospel, any more than he wrote this rejected story? Dr. Farrar strains at gnats and swallows camels, and prides himself on his discrimination.

His references to Justin Martyr and Papias seem less than ingenuous. It is not true that Justin Martyr "freely uses the Gospels." Dr. Farrar admits that he "does not name them." Saying that he "used" them is quietly assuming that they existed. All that Justin Martyr does, as a matter of fact, is to cite sayings ascribed to Jesus, but not in one single case does he cite a saying of Jesus in exactly the form in which it appears in the Four Gospels. Supposing that he wrote freely, and had ever so bad a memory, and never took the trouble to refer to the originals, it is simply inconceivable that he should never be right. Now and then he must have deviated into accuracy. And the fact that he never does is plain proof that he had not our Gospels before him. Nor does Papias mention "the Gospels." He mentions only two, Matthew and Mark, and he says that Matthew was written in _Hebrew_, Now, the earliest date at which Papias can be fixed is a.d. 140. This is chosen by Dr. Farrar, and we will let it pass unchallenged. And what follows? Why this, that no Christian writer before a.d. 140 betrays that he has so much as heard of _any_ Gospel, and even then but _two_ are known instead of _four_, and one of these is most certainly _not_ the Gospel which opens the New Testament.

All this was proved a quarter of a century ago by the author of _Supernatural Religion_--a work which is systematically ignored by the so-called Higher Critics because its author was a pronounced Rationalist. An excellent summary of this writer's demonstrations appears in the late Matthew Arnold's _God and the Bible_:--

"He seems to have looked out and brought together, to the best of his powers, every extant _passage_ in which, between the year 70 and the year 170 of our era, a writer might be supposed to be quoting one of our Four Gospels.

"And it turns out that there is constantly the same sort of variation from our Gospels, a variation inexplicable in men quoting from a real Canon, and quite unlike what is found in men quoting from our Four Gospels later on. It may be said that the Old Testament, too, is often quoted loosely. True; but it is also quoted exactly; and long passages of it are thus quoted. It would be nothing that our canonical Gospels were often quoted loosely, if long passages from them, or if passages, say, of even two or three verses, were sometimes quoted exactly. But from writers before Irenaeus not one such passage can be produced so quoted. And the author of _Supernatural Religion_ by bringing all the alleged quotations forward, has proved it."*

Now what is the exact value of these demonstrations? We will give it in Mr. Arnold's words: "There is no evidence of the establishment of our Four Gospels as a Gospel-Canon, or even of their existence as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century." Not only is there no evidence of the orthodox theory, but, as Mr. Arnold says, the "great weight of evidence is against it."

Dr. Giles--another ignored writer, although a clergyman of the Church of England--had said and proved the very same thing in his _Christian Records_; and had appended the following significant declaration:--

"There is positive proof, in the writings of the first ages of Christianity, that the same question as to the age and authorship of the

books of the New Testament was even then agitated, and if it was then set at rest, this was done, not by a deliberate sentence of the judge, but by burning all the evidence on which one side of the controversy was supported,"**

* Arnold, God and the Bible, pp. 222-3.

** Dr. Giles, Christian Records, p. 10.

It is probable that Dr. Farrar is well aware that our Four Gospels cannot be traced beyond the second half of the second century--that is, considerably more than a century after the alleged date of the death of Christ. But he shrinks from a frank admission of the fact, and leaves the reader to find it out for himself.

Instead of making this important and, as some think, damning admission, Dr. Farrar continues his remarks on the Bible Canon. That thirty-six books are accepted "on the authority of the Church" simply means, he tells us, that they are accepted "by the general consensus of Christians." The whole Church, as such, has hardly pronounced an opinion on the subject. The Churchmen who voted at Laodicea and Carthage "exercised no independent judgment," and their critical knowledge was "elementary." Nor was the decision of the Council of Trent any real improvement. Dr. Farrar approves the reply of the Reformed Churches, that "any man may reject books claiming to be Holy Scripture if he do not feel the evidence of their contents." But this is to make every man a judge, not only of what the Bible means, but also of what it should contain. Each unfettered Christian may therefore make up a Bible for himself; which is simply chaos come again. What then is the way of escape from this grotesque confusion? Dr. Farrar indicates it with a crooked finger:--

"The decision as to what books are or are not to be regarded as true Scripture, though we believe it to be wise and right, depends on no infallible decision. It must satisfy the scientific and critical as well as the spiritual requirements of each age."

This reduces the Bible Canon to a perpetual transformation scene. It is a tacit confession that the Protestant Bible is an arbitrary collection of questionable documents; that it has nothing to plead for itself but common usage; that its very contents, as well as their interpretation, are liable to change; in short, that if the Catholic stands upon the rock of implicit faith, and defies all dangers by closing his eyes and clutching the reassuring hand of his Holy Mother Church, the Protestant flounders about with the poor little dark-lantern of private judgment in a frightful mud-ocean--his old rock of faith in an infallible Bible having been reduced to dust by the engines of criticism, and finally to slush by a downflow from the lofty reservoir of pure reason.*

* It would be a pity to omit an amusing instance of the contemptuous dogmatism of Christian divines when they had the field to themselves. Dr. William Whitaker, a famous learned writer on the side of the Reformation in England, in his Disputation with two of the foremost Jesuits, Bellarmine and Stapleton, wrote as follows:--"Jerome, in the Proem of his Commentaries on Daniel, relates that Porphyry the philosopher wrote a volume against the book of our prophet Daniel, and affirmed that what is now extant under the name of Daniel was not published by the ancient prophet, but by some later Daniel, who lived in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. But we need not regard what the impious Porphyry may have written, who mocked at all the scriptures and religion itself." Well, this opinion of the blasphemous Porphyry, whose writings were burnt by the Christian Church,

is now accepted by the Higher Critics. Canon Driver, for instance, admits that the Book of Daniel is not the work of Daniel, that it could not have been written earlier than 300 B.C., and that "it is at least _probable_ that it was composed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 168 or 167" (Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 467). This involves that the fulfilled prophecies of Daniel were written after the events.

III. THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

Having examined Dean Farrar's observations on the Bible Canon, and seen that it is a more or less arbitrary selection from Hebrew and early Christian literature, many of the books being anonymous, while others bear the names of authors who did not write them, and most of them being much later compositions than orthodoxy supposes; we now take a leap forward to his twelfth chapter to see what he has to say on the subject of the Bible and Science. His first object is to drive home to his co-religionists the mischief of adhering to the old doctrine of Bible infallibility. Consequently he does not mince matters in dealing with the difficulties of the literal theory of inspiration. Writers like Gaussen contend that the Bible is a perfect authority in matters of science. Mr. Gladstone argues that Moses supernaturally anticipated the teachings of modern evolution, and that the inspired fishermen of Galilee, notably St. Peter, no less supernaturally anticipated all that modern astronomy teaches as to the final destiny of our planet. Dr. Farrar declines to follow them in this perilous path. He does not walk in the opposite direction, for that would lead him among the "infidels." He strikes off at right angles, and takes the line that the Bible was never intended to teach science, or anything else but religion. He quotes with approval the saying of Archbishop Sumner, that "the Scriptures have never revealed a scientific truth." He maintains that the writers of Scripture had only a natural knowledge of exact science; and that was precious little, and was indeed rather ignorance than knowledge, as they belonged to "the most unscientific of all nations in the most unscientific of all ages." "It is now understood by competent inquirers," he says, "that geology is God's revelation to us of one set of truths, and Genesis of quite another." "Nature," he says, "is a book which contains a revelation of God in one sphere, and Scripture a book which contains a revelation of him in another. Both books have often been misread, but no _truth_ revealed in the one can be irreconcilable with any truth revealed in the other." This, however, is a mere truism; for one truth cannot be irreconcilable with another truth. Dr. Farrar's statement sounds imposing and consolatory, but when you look into its meaning you see it is only a pulpit platitude.

But before we proceed to criticise Dr. Farrar's position, let us glance at his attack upon the literalists. He charges them with having opposed and persecuted every modern science, and with having manufactured the most absurd scientific theories from the text of the Bible; the said theories being not only ludicrous, but irreconcilably opposed to each other. Lactantius, with the Bible in his hand, ridiculed the rotundity of the earth. Roger Bacon and Galileo were imprisoned and tortured for teaching true science instead of the false science of the Church. John Wesley declared the Copernican astronomy to be in opposition to Scripture. Thomas Burnet's "Sacred Theory of the Earth," founded upon the Bible, was assailed by William Whiston, who based a different "Sacred Theory" upon the very same book. Buffon, the great French scientist, was compelled by the Sorbonne to recant, and to abandon everything in his writings that was "contrary to the narrative of Moses." Even when God (that is to say Dr. Simpson) gave to the world the

priceless boon of anaesthetics, there were many Biblicists who declared that the use of chloroform in cases of painful confinement was flying in the face of God's curse upon the daughters of Eve. Catholic and Protestant have alike pitted the Bible against Science, and both have been ignominiously beaten.

But this is not all. The theologians have been disgraced as well as defeated. With respect to the Buffon case, for instance, Dr. Farrar writes as follows:--

"The line now taken by apologists is very different from that of previous centuries, and less honest. It declares that Genesis and geology are in exact accord. It no longer refuses to believe the facts of nature, but instead of this it boldly sophisticates the facts of Scripture."

John Stuart Mill said that every new truth passes through three phases of reception. At first, it is declared to be false and dangerous; secondly, it is discovered that there is something to be said for it; lastly, its opponents turn round and declare "we said so all along." Dr. Farrar dots all the "i's" in Mill's statement. He asserts that "religious teachers" first say of every scientific discovery, "It is blasphemous and contrary to Scripture." Next they say, "There is nothing in Scripture which absolutely contradicts it." Finally they say, "It is distinctly revealed in Scripture itself."

Dr. Farrar puts the historic case against "orthodoxy"--which, of course, is not Christianity!--in the following fashion:--

"The history of most modern sciences has been as follows. Its discoverers have been proscribed, anathematised, and, in every possible instance, silenced or persecuted; yet before a generation has passed the champions of a spurious orthodoxy have had to confess that their interpretations were erroneous; and--for the most part without an apology and without a blush--have complacently invented some new line of exposition by which the phrases of Scripture can be squared into semblable accordance with the now acknowledged facts."

Even in the comparatively recent case of Darwin this was perfectly true. Dr. Farrar, who preached Darwin's funeral sermon in Westminster Abbey, says that he "endured the fury of pulpits and Church Congresses." He did so with quiet dignity; not an angry word escaped him. Yet before Darwin's death not only was the scientific world converted, but leading theologians said that, if Darwinism were proved to be true, there was "nothing in it contrary to the creeds of the Catholic faith."

Darwin never answered the clergy. He had better work to do. All he did was to smile at them. In one of his letters he said that when the men of science are agreed about anything all the clergy have to do is to say ditto. He understood that when science is victorious it will always have clerical patronage. Had he been able to do it, he would have smiled, in that beautiful benevolent way of his, at Dr. Farrar's funeral sermon. The worthy Dean thought they had got Darwin at last; and the grand old philosopher might have said, "Why yes, my _corpse!_"

So much for Dr. Farrar's impeachment of "orthodoxy" and its doctrine of plenary inspiration. Let us now examine his own position, and see whether it is logical as well as convenient.

Take the first chapter of Genesis. It is not a scientific revelation, though it seems to be. Whoever wrote it had only the science of his time. Nevertheless, it is of "transcendent value," according to Dr. Farrar. "Its true and deep object," he says, "was to set right an erring world in the supremely important knowledge that there was one God and

Father of us all, the Creator of heaven and earth, a God who saw all things which he has made, and pronounced them to be very good."

This is very pretty in its way; but how absurd it is in the light of the fact that the Hebrew creation story is all _borrowed!_ While the Jews were desert nomads, long before the concoction of their sacred scriptures the doctrine of a Creator of heaven and earth was known in India and in Egypt, not to recite a list of other nations. If this is all the first chapter of Genesis teaches, we may well exclaim, "Thank you for nothing!" It is a curious "revelation" which only discloses what is familiar. Had the Bible never been written, had the Jews never existed, the "true and deep object" of the first chapter of Genesis would have been quite as well subserved. Wherever the Christian missionaries have gone they have found the creation story in front of them. Wherever they took it they were carrying coals to Newcastle.

We venture to suggest that if Dr. Farrar thinks that all things God has made are very good, there are many persons who do not share his opinion. It would be idle to read that text to a sailor pursued by a shark. We could multiply this instance a thousandfold; but why give a list of all the predatory and parasitical creatures on this planet, from human tyrants and despoilers down to cholera microbes? Dr. Farrar may reply that everything ends in mystery, that we must have faith, that it is our interest as well as our duty to believe. But that is exactly what the Catholic Church says, and Dr. Farrar laughs it to scorn. The truth is, that all theology is ultimately a matter of faith; and the quarrel about more or less is a domestic difference. The greater difference is between Faith and Reason. This was clearly seen by Cardinal Newman, who pointed out that every mystery of the Roman Catholic faith is matched by a mystery in Protestant theology.

Finally, we have to remark that Dr. Farrar overlooks a very important point in this controversy. Having argued that the Bible was not intended to teach science, and has not in fact helped the world to a single scientific discovery; having also admitted that the Bible has all along been used to hinder the progress of natural knowledge, and to justify the persecution of honest investigators; he seems to imagine that there is no more to be said. But there is _much_ more to be said. We forbear to press the objection that Omniscience was very curiously employed in entangling a religious revelation with scientific blunders, which would necessarily retard the progress of scientific truth, and therefore of human civilisation. What we wish to emphasise is less open to the retort that Omniscience is beyond our finite judgment. We desire to urge that the Bible is not simply non-scientific. It is anti-scientific. Let us take, for instance, the story of the creation and fall of man. Even if it be not taken literally, but allegorically, it is thoroughly antagonistic to the teachings of Evolution. At the very least it implies that man is something special and unique, whereas he is included in the general scheme of biology, and is but "the paragon of animals." Get rid of the actual garden and the actual tree of knowledge, as Dr. Farrar does, and there still remains the fact that the fall of man is a falsehood, and the ascent of man a verity. The allegory does not correspond to the essential truth of man's history; and in spite of all the flattering rhetoric with which Dr. Farrar invests it--a rhetoric so inharmonious with its own consummate simplicity--there is something inexpressibly childish to the modern mind in the awful heinousness which is attributed to the mere eating of forbidden fruit. An act is really not vicious because it is prohibited, or virtuous because it conforms to the dictates of authority. When man attains to intellectual maturity he smiles at the ethical trick which was played upon his youthful ignorance. It is not sufficient to tell him that he must do this, and must not do that. He requires a reason. His intelligence must go hand in hand with his emotions. It is this union, indeed, which constitutes what we call conscience.

The truth is that the Bible is steeped in superstition and supernaturalism. Its cosmogony, its conception of man's origin and position in the universe, its infantile legends, its miracles and magic, its theory of madness and disease, its doctrine of the external efficacy of prayer, its idea that man's words and wishes avail to change the sweep of universal forces and the operation of their immutable laws: all this is in direct opposition to the letter and spirit of Science. The special pleading of clergymen like Dr. Farrar may afford a temporary relief to trembling Christians, and keep them for a further term in the fold of faith; but it will never make the slightest impression upon sceptics, unless it fills them with contemptuous pity for a number of clever men who are obliged, for personal reasons, to practise the lowest arts of sophistry.

IV. MIRACLES AND WITCHCRAFT

Dr. Farrar, as we have seen, holds that the Bible is not a revelation in science. The inspired writers were, in such matters, left to their natural knowledge. The Holy Spirit taught them that God made the world and all which it inhabits; but _how_ it was made they only conjectured. The truth, in _this_ respect, was left to the discovery of later ages.

This is a pretty and convenient theory, but it does not provide for every difficulty in the relationship between science and the Bible. There still remain the questions of miracles and witchcraft.

Dr. Farrar does not discuss these questions thoroughly. He only ventures a few observations. In his opinion, the two miracles of the Creation and the Incarnation "include the credibility of _all_ other miracles." We agree with him. Admit creation out of nothing, and you need not be astonished at the transformation of water into wine. Admit the birth of a boy from a virgin mother, and you need not raise physiological objections to the story of a man being safely entertained for three days in a whale's intestines. It is absurd to strain at gnats after swallowing camels. For this reason we are unable to understand Dr. Farrar's fastidiousness. He is ready to believe that some miracles are mistaken metaphors, that some were due to the action of unnoticed or ill-understood natural causes, and that others were providential occurrences instead of supernatural events. All this, however, is but a concession to the sceptical spirit. It is throwing out the children to the wolves. It may stop their pursuit for a little while, but they will come on again, and flesh their jaws upon the parents.

A mixed criterion of true miracles is laid down by Dr. Farrar. They must be (1) adequately attested, and (2) wrought for adequate ends, and (3) in accordance with the revealed laws of God's immediate dealings with man. The second and third conditions are too fanciful for discussion. They are, in fact, entirely subjective. The first condition is the only one which can be applied with decisive accuracy. The miracles must be _adequately attested_. But was it not David Hume who declared that "in all history" there is not a single miracle attested in this manner? And did not Professor Huxley say that Hume's assertion was "least likely" to be challenged by those who are used to weighing evidence and giving their decision with a due sense of moral responsibility?

It is easy enough to sneer at Hume. It is just as easy to answer what he never said. What the apologists of Christianity have to do is to take a single miracle of their faith and show that it rests upon adequate evidence. Anything short of this is intellectual thimble-rigging.

Dr. Farrar does not face this dreadful task. He treats us, instead, to some personal observations on the Fall, the Tower of Babel, Balaam's ass, Joshua's arrest of the sun and moon, and Jonah's submarine excursion. Let us examine these observations.

No Christian, says Dr. Farrar, is called upon to believe in an actual Garden of Eden and an actual talking serpent. Christians have believed in these things by the million. But that was before the clergy invented "the Higher Criticism" to disarm "infidelity." They know better now. The story of the Fall is false as a narrative. It is true as a "vivid pictorial representation of the origin and growth of sin in the human heart." All the literature of the world has failed to set forth anything "comparable to it in insight." Therefore it is "inspired."

How hollow this sounds when we recollect that the Hebrew story of the Fall was borrowed from the Persian mythology! How much hollower when we consider it as it stands, stripped of the veil of fancy and divested of the glamor of association! The "insight" of the inspired writer could only represent God as the landlord of an orchard, and man as a being with a taste for forbidden apples. The "philosopheme," as Dr. Farrar grandiosely styles it, is so absurd in its native nakedness that Rabbis and other divines have suspected a carnal mystery behind the apples, in order to give the "sin" of Adam and Eve a darker vein of sensuality.*

> * We cannot elaborate this point in a publication which is intended for general reading. Suffice it to say that one famous commentator suggests that Eve was seduced by an ape.

Nor is this all. The very idea of a Fall is inconsistent with Evolution. The true Garden of Eden lies not behind us, but before us. The true Paradise is not the earth as God made it for man, but the earth as man is making it for himself. The Bible teaches the _descent_ of man. Science teaches the _ascent_ of man. And the two theories are the antipodes of each other, not only in physical history, but in every moral and spiritual implication.

With regard to the story of the tower of Babel, we must not regard it as an inspired account of the origin of the diversity of human language. That is what it appears to be upon the face of it. But philology has exploded this childish legend, and a new meaning must be read into it. According to Dr. Farrar, it is a "symbolic way of expressing the truth that God breaks up into separate nationalities the tyrannous organisation of cruel despotisms." Now we venture to say that there is not a suggestion of this in the text. And the "truth" which Dr. Farrar reads into it so arbitrarily is a phenomenon of modern times. Nationality is a great force at present, but in ancient days the only power that could bind tribes together in one polity was a military despotism. From the point of view of evolution, both conquest and slavery were inevitable steps in the progress of civilisation. It is really nothing against the ancient Jews, for instance, that they fought like devils and made slaves of their enemies. It was the fashion of the time. The mischief comes in when we are told that their proceedings were under the sanction and control of God.

Dr. Farrar next tackles the story of Balaam, which is "another theme for ignorant ridicule." It is astonishing how sublime these Bible wonders become in the light of the Higher Criticism. A talking ass sounds like an echo of the Arabian Nights. But the author himself never intended you to believe it. Dr. Farrar is quite sure of that. You must forget the ass, and fix your attention on Balaam. Then you perceive that the story is "rich in almost unrivalled elements of moral edification." That is to say, you perceive it if you borrow Dr. Farrar's spectacles. But if you look with your own naked eyes you see that ass in the foreground of the picture, with outstretched neck and open jaws, holding forth to an

astonished universe.

With regard to Joshua's supreme miracle, Dr. Farrar avows his unbelief. A battle ode got mistaken for actual history. "He who chooses," says Dr. Farrar, "may believe that the most fundamental laws of the universe were arrested to enable Joshua to slaughter a few more hundred fugitives; and he who chooses may believe that nothing of the kind ever entered into the mind of the narrator." You pay your money and take your choice. Shape the old wax nose as you please. Believe what you like, and disbelieve what you like--and swear the author disbelieved it too.

Nor must the story of Jonah be taken literally. Regard the moral, and forget its fishy setting. Jesus Christ, indeed, referred to Jonah's sojourn in the "whale's belly" as typical of his own sojourn in the heart of the earth. But referring to a story is no proof of any belief in its truth. Not in the Bible. Jesus Christ also said, "Remember Lot's wife." But of course he did not believe the story literally. He used it for his own purpose. For the rest, he did not wish to unsettle men's minds by throwing doubt on such a time-honored narrative; besides, the time had not arrived to explain the chemical composition of rock-salt.

Witchcraft is a more serious matter. The Bible plainly says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This text sealed the doom of millions of old women. It is the bloodiest text in all literature. The Jews believed in witchcraft, and the law against witches found its way into their sacred Scriptures. Sir Matthew Hale, a great English judge and a good man, sentenced witches to be burnt in 1665, and said that he made no doubt at all that there were witches, for "the Scriptures had affirmed so much." Wesley, a century later, said that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible. Dr. Farrar sets down these facts honestly. He is also eloquent in reprobation of the cruelty inflicted on millions of "witches" in the Middle Ages. But he denies that the Bible is responsible for those infamies. "Witches" in the Bible may not mean witches, but "nefarious impostors." Good old wax nose again! Moreover, that ancient Jewish law was not binding upon Christians, and to make it so was "a gross misuse of the Bible." But how on earth could the Christians use it in any other way? The time came when men outgrew the superstition of witchcraft. Before that time they killed witches on Bible authority. Dr. Farrar himself, had he lived then, would have done the same. Living in a more enlightened age, he says that former Christians acted wrongly, and in fact diabolically. But what of the book which misled them? What of the book which, if it did not mislead them by design, harmonised so completely with their ignorant prejudices, and gave such a pious color to their unspeakable brutalities? Nor is this by any means the last word upon the subject. The witchcraft of the Old Testament has its counterpart in the demoniacal possession of the New Testament. Both are aspects of one and the same superstition.

The Bible _is_ responsible for the cruel slaughter of millions of alleged witches. It is also responsible for the prolonged treatment of lunatics as possessed. The methods of science are now adopted in civilised countries. Hysterical women are no longer tortured as witches. Lunatics are no longer chained and beaten as persons inhabited by devils. Kindness and common sense have taken the place of cruelty and superstition. This change was brought about, not through the Bible, but in spite of it.

Sir Matthew Hale and John Wesley were at least honest. They were too sincere to deny the plain teaching of the Bible. Dr. Farrar represents a more enlightened, but a more hypocritical, form of Christianity. He sneers at "reconcilers" like Mr. Gladstone, who try to bolster up the Creation story as a scientific revelation. But is he not a "reconciler" himself in regard to miracles? And does he not play fast and loose with truth and honesty in his attempt to clear the Bible of its guilty

responsibility in connection with that witch mania which is one of the darkest episodes in Christian history?

V. THE BIBLE AND FREETHOUGHT

The Bible may well be called the persecutor's text-book. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find in all its pages a single text in favor of real freedom of thought. Dr. Farrar champions what he calls "true Christianity," to which he declares that all persecution is entirely "alien." This "true Christianity" appears to depend upon "the spirit" of Christ, and seems to have little or no relation to the letter of Scripture. But what is the actual fact, when we view it in the light of history? In one of his lucid intervals of mere common sense, Dr. Farrar makes an important admission with regard to the worse than Armenian atrocities of the Jewish policy of extermination in Palestine. Those atrocities of cruelty and lust are said to have been ordered by God, but Dr. Farrar says that on this point the Jews were mistaken. They thought they were doing God a service, but they thought so ignorantly. And how was their ignorance corrected? Not by a special monition from heaven, but by the ordinary progress and elevation of the human mind. "It required," Dr. Farrar says, "but the softening influence of time and civilisation to obliterate in the best minds those fierce misconceptions." Precisely so. And is it anything but the softening influence of time and civilisation that makes Christians like Dr. Farrar ashamed of the bloody deeds of their co-religionists; which bloody deeds, by the way, have always been justified by appeals to the teachings of the Bible? Let there be no mistake on this point. Dr. Farrar himself does not scruple to write of the "deep damnation of deeds of deceit and sanguinary ferocity committed in the name of Holy Writ." "In some of their deadliest sins against the human race," he further says, "corrupted and cruel Churches have ever been most lavish in their appeals to Scripture." He admits that "the days are not far distant when it was regarded as a positive duty to put men to death for their religious opinions," and that this was defended by Old Testament examples, and also by some texts from the New Testament. And it was "by virtue of texts like these" that enemies of the human race were "enabled" to combine the "garb and language of priests with the temper and trade of executioners."

Now, what has Dr. Farrar to urge _per contra?_ Simply this: that the "early Christians" pleaded for toleration. "Force," they said, "is hateful to God." "It is no part of religion," said Tertullian, "to _compel_ religion." But suppose all this be admitted--and there is much to be said by way of qualification--what does it amount to? The "early Christians" were in a minority. They did not yet command the sword of the magistrate. They could not persecute except by holding no fellowship with unbelievers, by shaking off the dust of their feet against those who rejected their Gospel, and by other harmless though detestable exhibitions of bigotry. They had to plead for their own existence, and in doing so they were obliged to appeal to the principle of general toleration. But the moment they triumphed, under Constantine, they began to flout the very principle to which they had formerly appealed. The humility of their weakness was more than equalled by the pride of their power. And what was the result? "From Augustine's days down to those of Luther," Dr. Farrar says, "scarcely one voice was raised in favor, I will not say of _tolerance_, but even of abstaining from fire and bloodshed in support of enforced uniformity." Dr. Farrar denounces in creditable language the frightful butcheries of Alva in the Netherlands, for which the Pope presented him with a jewelled sword bearing a pious inscription. He is properly horrified at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, in honor of which Pope Gregory XIII. struck a triumphant

medal, and went in procession to sing a Te Deum to God, while the cannon thundered from the Castle of St. Angelo and bonfires blazed in the streets of Rome. He is bitter against the Church of Rome for its vast shedding of innocent blood. He reminds us that the infamous Holy Inquisition is still toasted by Catholic professors at Madrid; and that intolerance, having lost its power, has not lost its virulence, nor "ceased to justify its burning hatred by Scripture quotations." And he cites Manning's successor at Westminster, the truculent Cardinal Vaughan, as declaring with perfect approval that "the Catholic Church has never spared the knife, when necessary, to cut off rebels against her faith and authority."

But let it not be imagined that all the guilt of persecution rested upon the Church of Rome. Protestantism persecuted as freely as the Papacy. That heretics should be put down, and if necessary killed, was a principle common to both Churches. The question in dispute was, Which _were_ the heretics? This is so incontestable that we need not fortify it with Protestant quotations and Protestant examples. It is not true, as Dr. Farrar alleges, that Luther "boldly proclaimed that thoughts are toll-free," if it is meant that he condemned persecution. Thoughts were toll-free against Romish exactions; that was what Luther meant. He held as strongly as any Papist that those who denied one essential doctrine of Christianity should be punished by the magistrates. He declared that reason always led to unbelief. He besought the Protestant princes to uphold "the faith" by every means in their power. And when the serfs rebelled, thinking that the "freedom" the Reformers talked about was to become a reality, it was Luther who wrote against them with unsurpassable ferocity, and advised that they should be "slaughtered like mad dogs."

Dr. Farrar rather judiciously refrains from mentioning Calvin in this connection, but in another part of the volume he refers to the great Genevian "reformer" in a somewhat gingerly manner. When the sins of Catholics have to be condemned he is quite dithyrambic; but when he has to censure the sins of Protestants he displays a most touching tenderness. Nothing could well be worse than the mixture of religious bigotry, personal spleen, and low duplicity, with which Calvin hunted Servetus to his fiery doom. Dr. Farrar sympathetically describes this vile act as an "error." He tries to satisfy his conscience, afterwards, by confessing that the Calvinists in general "were for the most part as severe to all who differed from them as they imagined God to be severe to the greater part of the human race."

Dr. Farrar's treatment of this subject is superficial. It is not a Bible text here or there which is the real basis of persecution. We advise him to read George Eliot's review of Lecky's _History of Rationalism_. He will then see that persecution is founded upon the fatal doctrine of salvation by faith. This doctrine makes the heretic more noxious than a serpent. A serpent poisons the body, a heretic poisons the soul. If it be true that his teaching may draw souls to hell, human welfare demands his extermination. Dr. Farrar does not disclaim this doctrine, and if he fails to act upon it he only betrays an amiable inconsistency. His heart is better than his head.

Dr. Farrar, like other Protestants, talks about the right of private judgment. But this is only fine and futile verbiage, unless he admits the sinlessness of intellectual error. If judgment depends on the will, it is through the will amenable to motives; consequently, the way to pro-mote correct opinions is to promise rewards and threaten punishments. But if judgment does not depend on the will; if it is necessarily determined by the laws of reason and evidence; then it is an absurdity to bribe and intimidate. Now there is no third alternative. One of these two theories must be right, and the other must be wrong. Dr. Farrar is logically bound to take his choice. If he believes that

judgment depends on the will, he has no right to denounce persecution. If he believes that judgment does not depend on the will, he has no right to censure the most absolute freethought.

There are but two camps--the camp of Faith and the camp of Reason. Dr. Farrar belongs to the former. But he does not find his position comfortable. He casts a longing eye on the other camp. He wants to be in both. He therefore tries to form an alliance between them, if not to amalgamate them under one banner.

Reason, said Bishop Butler, is the only faculty wherewith we can judge of anything, even of revelation itself. Dr. Farrar quotes this statement with approval. He quotes similar sentences from other Protestant writers. Then he turns upon the Roman Church for keeping the Bible out of the hands of the people, and denounces it for this with ultra-Protestant vigor. He imagines that this is a vindication of Protestantism, at any rate relatively, as a champion of reason in opposition to blind faith and absolute authority. But _private_ judgment and _free_ judgment are not identical. When the Protestant puts an open Bible into your hands, and tells you to read it and judge of it for yourself, he is acting like a Freethinker; but when he proceeds to say that if you do not find it to be a divine book, and believe all its teaching about God, and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and heaven and hell, you will infallibly be damned, he is acting like a Papist. His right of private judgment, at the finish, always means the right to differ from him on trivial points, and the duty of agreeing with him on every point which he chooses to regard as essential. If this is denied by Dr. Farrar, let him honestly answer this question--Is a Freethinker who has examined the Bible, and rejected it as a divine revelation, liable to any sort of penalty for his disbelief? The answer to this question will decide whether Dr. Farrar is really maintaining the rights of reason, or is merely maintaining the Protestant theory of faith against that of the Catholics, and standing up for the authority of the Book instead of the authority of the Church.

Meanwhile we venture to suggest that the Bible texts referred to by Dr. Farrar, as requiring us to exercise the right of private judgment, are very little to the point. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" is a pretty text, but it does not seem to have much bearing on the issue. "Try the spirits" is all right in its way; but what if you find that _all_ the spirits are illusions? "Prove all things" is good, but it must be taken with the context. Jesus indeed is reported to have said, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" But he is also reported to have said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

By a judicious selection of texts you can prove anything from the Bible, and disprove anything--as Catholics have often reminded Protestants. To pick out passages that to some extent are favorable to a certain view, and to ignore much stronger passages that are clearly opposed to it, may be an exercise of private judgment, and may satisfy the conscience of neo-Protestants of the school of Dr. Farrar; but it invites a contemptuous smile from Freethinkers who believe that Reason ought not to suffer such a prostitution.

We have to point out, finally, that Protestantism, with its open Bible, has everywhere maintained laws against blasphemy and heresy. The laws against heresy have fallen into desuetude in England, but while they lasted they were simply ferocious. We heard the late Lord Coleridge say from his seat in the Court of Queen's Bench, as Lord Chief Justice, that the Protestant laws against Roman Catholics, particularly in Ireland, where they were executed with remorseless ferocity, are without a parallel in the history of the world. Catholicism, however, is no longer under a ban. Even the Jews have been admitted to equal rights with their

fellow citizens. But laws still remain in existence, and are occasionally put into operation, against "blasphemers." According to the language of common law indictments, it is a crime to bring the Holy Scripture or the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt. It is true that many Christians are ready to profess a certain aversion to such laws, but they make no effort to repeal them. Many others contend that "blasphemy" is a question of manner, that the feelings of Christians should be protected, and that while men should not be punished for being Freethinkers, they should be punished for wounding orthodox susceptibilities. It is not proposed, however, that any limitations of taste or temper should be imposed upon Christian controversialists; and this contention may therefore be regarded as a subterfuge of bigotry. On the whole, it may be said that Catholics without the Bible, and Protestants with the Bible, persecute unbelief to the full extent of their opportunities; and it is only as toleration grows from other roots, and is nourished by other causes, that the Bibliolaters find out subtle interpretations of simple texts in favor of the prevailing tendency.

VI. MORALS AND MANNERS

Dr. Farrar takes the position that "the Bible is not homogeneous in its morality." There is a higher and a lower; and, to adopt the fine but paradoxical metaphor of Milton, within the lowest deep a lower deep still opens its dreadful abyss of crime and brutality. The same admission is made by Professor Bruce,* of the Free Church of Scotland; but this gentleman is more subtle than Dr. Farrar, and tries to save the reputation of the Bible by a notable piece of cauistical special-pleading. He does not allow, though he does not expressly deny, that the Bible contains any immorality. What he does is to draw a distinction between high morality and low morality. Immorality is sinning against your conscience. High morality is acting right up to its noblest dictates. Low morality is conduct in honest conformity to the low standard of a conscience but half-enlightened. When the prophetess Deborah sings triumphantly over the infamous exploit of Jael, who invited the fugitive Sisera into her tent, and assassinated him while he slept in the confidence of her hospitality, we must not say that either of these precious females was guilty of immorality. They were simply carrying out a low morality. And the same applies to Deborah's exclamation: "To every man a damsel or two"--meaning that the Jewish soldiers slew their male enemies and dragged home a brace of maidens each for themselves. Such conduct would be highly improper now, but it was all right then; at least it was as right as they knew; and we must not judge the actors by later ethical standards. So says Professor Bruce, and it would be true enough if the Bible were not put forward as a divine book, or if it ever reprehended the infamies of God's chosen people. But it does nothing of the kind; it mentions Jael and Deborah in terms of absolute approval.

* Christian Apologetics, p. 309.

Dr. Farrar severely denounces the Jewish wars of extermination in Palestine, regardless of the fact--which is as true as any other religious fact in the Bible--that these atrocities were expressly commanded by Jehovah. Divines have defended the massacre of the Midianites, for instance, and the appropriation of their unmarried women; but Dr. Farrar calls their arguments "miserable pleas," and adds that if such "guilty and horrible" doings were "recorded without blame," it only shows that "the moral views of the desert tribes on such subjects were in this respect very rudimentary." These desert tribes were the chosen people of God; their prophets spoke under divine

inspiration; yet even Jeremiah, in denouncing Moab, cries: "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." According to Dr. Farrar, this proves how "slow" was the "development of the religious consciousness of mankind." But how did it happen that the Jews, with all the advantage of special inspiration, were just as slow in this respect as any other nation in the world's history? What is the use of "inspiration" if it does not appreciably quicken the natural development of the human conscience?

Many of the Bible heroes are fit for a distinguished place in the Newgate Calendar. Dr. Farrar himself cannot stomach "some details" in the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Jephthah, and David. Still, he urges that "the use made of them in the sceptical propaganda is often illegitimate." These worthies were not "faultless." It is their "general faithfulness" which is "rightly held up to admiration as our example." Faithfulness to what? Simply to their own greed and ambition, first of all, and secondly to the dominance of their tribal god Jehovah, who by such instruments triumphed over his rival dieties, and became at last the sole Lord God of Israel.

Dr. Farrar allows no palliating plea for the cursing Psalms. He cites a few of the very worst passages, black with hatred and red with blood, and asks: "Can the casuistry be anything but gross which would palm off such passages as the very utterance of God?" Moses was "a great lawgiver and a great prophet," but Dr. Farrar will not "defend the divinity of passages so morally indefensible" as that, for instance, which gives the slave-owner impunity in killing his slave, provided he does not slay him on the spot, but beats him so that he dies "in a day or two." Nor is there "divinity" in the order to the Jews to refrain from eating bad meat, but to sell it to the Gentiles. Neither is there "divinity" in the order (Deut. xxi. 10-14) to take a wife for a month on trial. These things are parts of an ostensibly divine code, but lawgivers and people were alike mistaken. Inspiration did not guide them aright, but somehow or other it enables Dr. Farrar to correct their blunders three thousand years afterwards; which is merely saying, after all, that inspiration does not pioneer but follow the march of human progress.

During the reign of David a dreadful incident occurred. There had been a three years' famine, and David "inquired of the Lord." The answer was, "Blood upon Saul and upon his house!" Seven of Saul's sons were hung up "unto the Lord," and the famine was stopped. Dr. Farrar tells of an intelligent artisan who got up at a meeting and asked "whether it was not meant to imply that God was pacified by the blood of innocent human victims?" But he does not give the answer; and it either means this or it means nothing at all. In the same way, the story of Jephthah, who offered his daughter as a burnt-offering to the Lord, takes such an immolation for granted as a religious act of perfect propriety. Jephthah is mentioned as a hero of faith in the New Testament, and no hint is given that he acted wrongly in sacrificing his daughter on the altar of Jehovah.

We have said enough on this subject to give the reader a fair idea of Dr. Farrar's position. Let us now pass from Bible morals to Bible manners.

"The Bible," says Dr. Farrar, "is assailed on the ground that it contains coarse and unedifying stories." Take the story of Lot and his daughters, to say nothing of the bestial attempt on the angels in Sodom. Could anything be more repulsive? Is there any excuse for putting such abominable feculence into the hands of children? After a lot of talk about it, and about, Dr. Farrar offers us the following most sapient observation: "The story of Lot wears a very different complexion if we regard it as an exhibition of unknown traditions about the connection between the Israelites and the tribes of Moab and Ammon." But what does

this mean? The Moabites and Ammonites, according to the Bible, were hereditary enemies of the Jews, and it was impossible to exterminate them. They were evidently near of kin to the chosen people. Now, if these two facts are put together, it is easy to see the purpose of this story of Lot and his daughters. The Jews traced their own descent, in a perfectly honorable way, from Abraham and his legitimate wife Sarah, who are doubtless legendary characters. On the other hand, they traced the descent of the Moabites and Ammonites, their cousins and enemies, through the no less legendary Lot and his two daughters, thus throwing the aspersion of incest upon the cradle of both those races. This is the adequate and satisfactory explanation of the story. It is an exhibition of dirty and unscrupulous hatred; and, as such, it is a curious fragment of "the Word of God."

Take next what Dr. Farrar calls "the pathetic story of Hosea," the prophet who was ordered by God to marry a prostitute--not to use the more downright language of the English Bible. Dr. Farrar suggests that there is some doubt as to the meaning of the original. Hosea's wife may have turned out a baggage after the nuptials, instead of being one before. "It was the anguish caused by her infidelity," he says, "that first woke Hosea to the sense of Israel's infidelity to Jehovah." And read in the light of this "modern criticism" the story of Hosea is "in the highest degree pure and noble." How pretty! All that remains for Dr. Farrar to do is to explain away as equally "pure and noble" the imagery of Ezekiel in reference to Aholah and Aholibah. There is no reason why "modern criticism" in the hands of gentlemen like Dr. Farrar should not transform Priapus into a Sunday-school teacher.

Not only are there very gross stories in the Bible, many of which are too beastly to dwell upon, but its language is often gratuitously disgusting. And every scholar knows that the Hebrew text is sometimes far more "purple" than our English version. Dr. Farrar admits that if the "exact meaning" of certain passages were understood, they "could not be read without a blush." "Happily," he says, they are "disguised by the euphemisms of translations." That is to say, the inspired Bible writers, or penmen of the Holy Ghost, as old divines called them, were often indecent and sometimes positively obscene. Dr. Farrar's explanation is, that "ancient and Eastern readers" were not easily shocked, and that our modern "sensibility" is of "recent growth." But this proves again that "inspiration" is in no sense the cause of progress, and does not anticipate it in the slightest degree.

VII. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

"The Bible," Dr. Farrar says, "is inextricably mingled with all that is greatest in human history." This is a fair specimen of his roystering style. We presume he has contracted it through long years of preaching from the coward's castle of the pulpit, where a man can exaggerate as much as he pleases without the slightest fear of contradiction. Dr. Farrar does not say that the Bible is mixed up with _much_ of the greatest in human history; no, it must be mixed up with _all_ the greatest--which is a transparent falsehood and a no less transparent absurdity. What did Greece and Rome owe to the Bible? Absolutely nothing. There is no evidence that they were acquainted with any part of the Old Testament, and Greece had become a mere name before a line of the New Testament was written. Some of the greatest things in the world were done and said by the "heathen." Greek philosophy, Greek literature, Greek art, are imperishable. Roman jurisprudence and Roman government are the basis of every civilised polity. Plutarch's heroes are all Pagans, and let Dr. Farrar match them if he can in the history of Christendom.

Dr. Farrar calls the Bible "the statesman's manual," but he judiciously refrains from showing that statesmen ever act upon its teaching; indeed, he spends a great deal of time in showing that they ought _not_ to act upon its teaching, unless they carefully avoid the obvious "letter," and allow themselves to be influenced by the recondite "spirit." For instance, it is perfectly clear that the Bible does not contain a single word against slavery; it is also perfectly clear to all who possess a tincture of scholarship that many of its references to slavery are fraudulently translated. "Servants obey your masters" really means "Slaves obey your owners." Moreover, the Bible contains precise regulations of slavery. God did not tell the Jews that holding slaves was infamous, that man could never have honest property in human flesh and blood. He allowed them to buy and sell Gentiles at their pleasure. He permitted them to enslave their own countrymen for a period of seven years, and in certain cases "for ever." Even in the New Testament we find St Paul sending back a runaway slave to his master. True, he sent with the slave a touching letter to the slave-owner, but sending him back at all was giving a sanction to the institution. Dr. Farrar admits that American pulpits "rang with incessant Scriptural defences of slavery." He quotes from a Southern bishop, who described slavery as "a curse and a blight," yet declared it to be "recognised by the Bible," so that "every man has a right to his own slaves, provided they are not treated with unnecessary cruelty." Dr. Farrar asks whether there was ever "a stranger utterance on the lips of a Christian bishop." He calls this "distorting the Bible." But he does not prove the distortion. He calmly assumes it. He cannot deny the existence of all those slavery texts in the Bible. All he can do is to say that what was "relatively excusable" among the Jews is at present "execrable," and is now "absolutely and for ever wrong." Very good; but how was that discovered? Not by reading the Bible. The Jews read the Bible, the early Christians read the Bible, just as well as Dr. Farrar, but they did not find that it condemned slavery. Dr. Farrar lives in a later age, in the light of a higher civilisation. He therefore _reads into_ the Bible whatever it _ought to_ contain as the word of God. He does not scruple to override explicit texts by more or less arbitrary deductions from vague maxims and ejaculations. He pretends that the "spirit" of the Bible in some way wrought the abolition of slavery. But every well-informed student is aware that the abolition of slavery depended upon economical conditions. We _outgrow_ slavery by advancing beyond it in the process of industrial development, and when we _have_ outgrown it we regard it with abhorrence. When the institution is in the way of being supplanted by a higher form of productive labor, the moral revolt against it begins, growing in strength and intensity as the economical change approaches its climax. It was natural that the anti-slavery movement in America should take place in the Northern States, where the conditions favourable to slavery did not exist as they did in the Southern States. We may be pardoned for supposing that if Dr. Farrar's lot had been cast in a Southern State he would have defended slavery as a Bible institution. He is preaching now after its abolition, when denunciation of it is cheap and easy, and is no particular credit to the preacher's religion. While slavery existed in America, it was at first justified by the Bible in all parts of the Union. Northern abolitionists at last found that the Bible did not teach slavery after all; but this did not alter the view of the Southern slaveholders and the Southern Churches. Here again we see the force of the Catholic taunt that Protestants can prove anything, and disprove anything, by appealing to texts in such a composite book as the Bible. Here again we also see that the Bible never _instigates_ any step in the march of human improvement.

Dr. Farrar waxes eloquent, after his special fashion, over the glories of England in the age of Elizabeth. He attributes them all to the "open Bible," which was then placed in the hands of the people. Of course they had nothing to do with the new astronomy, the discovery of America, and

the invention of printing! Such paltry causes as these cannot enter into competition with the might and majesty of the Bible! Still, we may venture to remind Dr. Farrar that these Englishmen of the Elizabethan age, with the "open Bible" in their hands, went and started the African slave trade. Evidently they did not read in it then, as Dr. Farrar does now, any condemnation of that horrible business. They worked it for all it was worth. England, with the "open Bible" in its hand, continued to do so for another two hundred years. One of the chief centres of the slave trade was the pious city of Bristol. It grew rich on the abominable traffic. Slavery has been abolished, but the old odor of piety still clings to the city of Bristol. Its merchants fattened on the slave trade with the "open Bible" in their hands. They now subscribe to missionary societies to convert the blacks, and they still stick to the "open Bible." It was good for upholding black slavery, and it is still good for upholding white slavery.

All that we have said about slavery applies in its degree to polygamy. Both institutions are sanctioned by the Bible, and the pleas of the "Higher Criticism" in relation to the one are just as hollow as they are in relation to the other. We may go farther and say that the Bible is very far from being woman's best friend, as it is often represented. It starts by making her the Devil's first customer, and the introducer of sin and death; it continues to hold her as inferior and subject to man, lumping her in the tenth commandment with the house, the ox, and the ass, as the man's property; and, finally, in the New Testament, it expressly tells her that her duty is to be silent and submissive, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church.

We need not follow Dr. Farrar in his rhapsodical references to the various achievements of the Bible. We may remark, however, that his reference to Japan is singularly unhappy. That country _has_ accepted the leading ideas of Western civilisation, but it has _not_ accepted Christianity. Nor is Dr. Farrar well advised in laying so much stress on the Pilgrim Fathers. He says that they had a preference for the "pure, unadulterated lessons of the Bible." Perhaps they had. But what were those lessons as illustrated by their actions? Certainly intolerance was one of them. They had no conception of religious liberty. "The Pilgrim Fathers," as Sir Walter Besant remarks in his little book on _The Rise of the Empire_, "believed that everybody should think as they themselves thought. Had they achieved their own way, they would have sent Laud himself, and all who thought like him, across the ocean with the greatest alacrity." They also believed in witchcraft, probably because Dr. Farrar was not at hand to explain that the Bible did not mean what it said; and they tortured and burnt witches with remarkable gusto.

It would also be a waste of time to correct all Dr. Farrar's statements about the influence of the Bible in other directions. We will take a single illustration of his fantastical method. He tells us that the Bible "inspired the pictures of Fra Angelico and Raphael, the music of Handel and Mendelssohn." Perhaps he will tell us whether it inspired Raphael's picture of the Fornarina, and why it did not inspire the music of Beethoven and Wagner. Both those great composers, as a matter of fact, were "infidels."

Nothing could be more absurd than orthodox talk about the Bible "inspiring" great poets, artists, and musicians. Men of genius are inspired by nature. Their inspiration is born with them. It cannot be made; it can only be utilised. All that religions have done is to employ the genius they could not create. Every religion has done this in turn. The genius was there always as a natural endowment. It existed before all the world's religions, and it will outlive them.

VIII. INSPIRATION

The Higher Criticism, as expounded by Dr. Farrar, admits nearly all the Bible difficulties that have been advanced by "infidels." Let us recapitulate the most important. The Bible is hopelessly at variance with science. It sometimes contradicts well-established history. Many of its stories, taken literally, are obviously absurd. Some of the actions it records with apparent approval are wicked or disgusting. A good deal of its language sins against common decency. Several books were not written by the authors whose names they bear. Others are, and must for ever remain, anonymous. The dates of composition of the various books are not what has been generally supposed. Occasionally the true chronology differs from the received chronology by many centuries. To the great majority of readers the Bible has never been known, and never can be known, except in translations. No translation can possibly be perfect. Every translation of the Bible is known to contain grave and numerous errors. Even in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts there are thousands of various readings. In some cases the text is uncertain, in some cases interpolated, and in others irrecoverably impaired. The vowel points by which Hebrew is now read are demonstrably a modern invention. Even the discourses of Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, are not reported with accuracy. The New Testament writers seldom quote from the Old Testament exactly, but generally rely upon the Greek translation called the Septuagint.

Sometimes they quote passages which are not in Scripture at all. "Out of 288 passages quoted from the Old Testament in the New," says Dr. Farrar, "there are but 53 which agree accurately with the original Hebrew. In 76 the New Testament differs both from the Greek and the Hebrew; and in 99 the New Testament, the Greek, and the Hebrew are all variant."

On the face of it, then, the Bible is doomed. A book of which all these things can be said, without the slightest fear of contradiction, must sooner or later be dropped as the Word of God. It will be recognised as a human composition.

Meanwhile, those who live by the Bible, and are professionally interested in its "supremacy," as Dr. Farrar calls it, cast about a for means of giving it a fresh reputation. The old conception of it is fatally discredited; a new one may give it a fresh lease of life.

Evidently there is only one direction open to the theological trimmers. They must start another theory of inspiration--one that will conserve the "sacred" character of the Bible in spite of every difficulty that has been, or can be discovered.

The Bible is no longer to be called _the_ Word of God. Ruskin says, and Dr. Farrar seems to quote it approvingly, that "it is a grave heresy (or wilful source of division) to call any book, or collection of books, the Word of God." Ten pages later, however, we are told that the Bible, as a whole, _may_ be spoken of as the Word of God, because it "contains words and messages of God to the human soul." This word "contains" is the magical spell by which Dr. Farrar seeks to dissipate all difficulties. He finds the expression in the Church Articles, in the Book of Homilies, and in the Shorter Catechism. But in order to see how illegitimate is Dr. Farrar's use of these authorities, let us take his extract from the last of them: "The Word of God which is _contained_ in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is the only rule to direct us how we may enjoy and glorify Him." Is it not clear that the word "_contained_" is used here in its primary meaning? Did not the writers mean that the Word of God is included or comprehended in the Old and New Testament only, and is not to be found elsewhere? Would they not have been shocked to hear a clergyman of the Church of England say that some parts of the Bible were

not the Word of God? If so, their use of the word "contain" lends no countenance to the use made of it by Dr. Farrar. And is it not a shallow trick upon our intelligence to argue that different persons, using the same word, necessarily mean the same thing? Words are the money of fools, as Hobbes said, but only the counters of wise men. We must get at the actual value of the thing which is symbolised. And the moment we do this, we see that Dr. Farrar's theory of the Word of God is _not_ the same as that of the gentlemen who drew up the Shorter Catechism. They would indeed have laughed at his "contains," and excommunicated and imprisoned him, and perhaps burnt him at the stake. It is not by torturing one poor word ten thousand ways that such wide differences can be reconciled.

Passing by this ridiculous legerdemain, let us take Dr. Farrar's theory for what it is worth. The Bible _contains_ the Word of God. But how are we to find it? What is the criterion by which we are to separate God's word from man's word? Dr. Farrar bids us use "the ordinary means of criticism and spiritual discernment." But such a vague generality is nothing but verbiage. What we want is the _criterion_. Now the nearest approach to it in all Dr. Farrar's pages is the following:--

"Is it not a plain and simple rule that anything in the Bible which teaches, or is misinterpreted to teach, anything which is not in accordance with the love, the gentleness, the truthfulness of Christ's Gospel, is _not_ God's word to us, however clearly it stands on the page of Scripture?"

This is at best a _negative_ criterion; and, on close examination, it turns out to be no criterion at all. The criterion, to be valid, must be _external_ to the book itself. Dr. Farrar's criterion is _internal_. He picks out one part of the Bible as the standard for judging all the rest. This is entirely arbitrary. Moreover, it would soon be found impossible in practice. Dr. Farrar's criterion may be "plain," but it is not so "simple," except in the uncomplimentary sense of the word. For "Christ's Gospel," by which the rest of the Bible is to be tried, is itself a very composite and self-contradictory thing. Further, if all that agrees with Christ's Gospel is the Word of God, is it not superfluous as being a mere repetition? Dr. Farrar would therefore bring the actual, valid Word of God within the compass of the Four Gospels; dismissing all the rest, like the Arabian Caliph who commanded a whole library to be burnt on the ground that if the books differed from the Koran they were pernicious, and if they agreed with it they were useless. Nor is this all. Dr. Farrar admits that the discourses of Jesus Christ are not reported with accuracy. Therefore, having made the Gospels the criterion of the Word of God in the rest of the Bible, he would be obliged to select some special passages as the criterion of the Word of God in the rest of the Gospels. This is what Shakespeare would call a world-without-end process.

Candidly, it seems to us that if the Bible _is_ not the Word of God, but only _contains_ the Word of God--that is to say, if it is partly God's word and partly man's word--the clergy of all denominations should unite in publishing a Bible with the divine and human parts clearly specified by being printed in different types. And surely, if the Bible is in any sense inspired, it should be possible, by a new and final act of inspiration, to settle this distinction for ever.

Allowing the clergy to meditate this holy enterprise, we proceed to consider Dr. Farrar's theory of inspiration. Of course he discards the old theory of verbal dictation; indeed, he calls it "irreverent," because it attributes to God what modern men of intelligence and good manners would be ashamed to own. He even quarrels with the very term inspiration as "vague," and says it would be "a boon if some less ambiguous word could be adopted." Four theories, he says, have been

entertained in the Christian Church. The first is the _mechanical_ theory, which implies that the Holy Ghost dictated, and the inspired penmen were merely his amanuenses. The second is the _dynamic_, which recognises "the indefeasible guidance of the Holy Spirit." The third is that of _illumination_, which confines the divine guidance to matters of faith and doctrine. The fourth is that of _general_ inspiration, which regards the Holy Spirit as influencing the writers in the same way as it influences "other noble and holy souls." This fourth theory is the one which Dr. Farrar himself affects. Every pure and sweet influence upon the human soul, he says, is a heavenly inspiration. We owe to it "all that is best and greatest in philosophy, eloquence, and song." Haydn said of his grandest chorus in the "Creation": "Not from me but from above it all has come!" "There is inspiration," says Dr. Farrar, "whenever the spirit of God makes itself heard in the heart of man." Apparently--for we can never be quite sure of Dr. Farrar--the only superiority of the Bible lies in the fact that "the voice of God" speaks to us "far more intensely" out of it than out of "any [other?] form of human speech."

Such a theory of inspiration is too vague and universal. Sooner than give up inspiration altogether Dr. Farrar is prepared to share it all round. But is not proving too much as bad as proving too little? If the Bible is only inspired--where it _is_ inspired--in the same sense as other books are inspired; if the difference is not one of kind, but simply of degree; then it is really idle to talk about its inspiration any longer. The word _inspiration_ loses all its original meaning. It becomes a poetical expression, implying nothing supernatural, but merely the exaltation of natural powers and faculties. God is then behind the Bible only as God is behind everything; and Christianity, ceasing to be a special revelation, becomes only a certain form of Theism.

This loose theory of _general_ inspiration will doubtless serve the present turn of the clergy, who have to face a general and growing dissatisfaction with the Bible. But it cannot live very long in a scientific age. It will be found out in time, like all the Bible theories that preceded it. The first Protestant dogma was the infallibility of Scripture. That was exploded by modern science and textual criticism. Then came the dogma of plenary inspiration, which had a comparatively short-lived existence, as it was only the old dogma of infallibility in disguise. Next came the dogma of illumination, which may be said to have begun with Coleridge and ended with Maurice. Finally, we have the dogma of general inspiration, which began nowhere and ends nowhere, which means anything or nothing, and which is a sort of "heads we win, tails you lose" theory in the hands of the clever expounders of the Higher Criticism.

Behind the last, as well as the first, of all these theories of inspiration stands the fatal objection of Thomas Paine, that inspiration, to be real, must be personal. A man may be sure that God speaks to him, but how can he be sure that God has spoken to another man? He may think it possible or probable, but he can never be certain. What is revelation at first-hand, said Paine, is only hearsay at second-hand. Real inspiration, therefore, eventuates in mysticism. The inner light shines, the inner voice speaks; God holds personal communication with the individual soul. Each believer carries what the author of _Hudibras_ calls "the dark lanthorn of the spirit," which "none see by but those who bear it." And the very multiplicity and diversity of the oracle's deliverances are a proof that in all of them man is speaking to himself. He questions his gods, and hears only the echo of his own voice.

IX. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Some of the teaching of the Higher Criticism as to the authorship and credibility of the Old Testament is, on the face of it, contrary to the plain language of Jesus Christ himself in the Gospels. Moses, for instance, is no longer considered as the author of the Pentateuch. Canon Driver, who is perhaps the chief scholar of this movement in the Church of England, as Dean Farrar is perhaps its chief rhetorician, locates the composition of the book of Deuteronomy in the period between Isaiah and Jeremiah. Throughout the book, he observes, the writer introduces Moses in the third person, and puts speeches in his mouth which of course he never uttered. But in "framing discourses appropriate to Moses' situation!" he was not guilty of "forgery," for he was "doing nothing inconsistent with the literary usages of his age and people." That is to say, everybody did it, and this writer was no worse than his contemporaries--which is probably true. But passing by the question of casuistry here involved, we repeat that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is entirely abandoned. Dr. Farrar is quite as emphatic as Dr. Driver on this point. He denies that there is "any proof of the existence of a _collected_ Pentateuch earlier than the days of Ezra (b.c. 444)"--a thousand years after the time of Moses. He points out that the salient features of the so-called Mosaic Law, such as the Passover, the Sabbatical year, and the Day of Atonement, are not to be traced in the old historical books or in the earlier prophets. Nor does he scruple to assert that the Pentateuch is "a work of composite structure," which has been "edited and re-edited several times," and "contains successive strata of legislation." In the New Testament, however, Moses is repeatedly spoken of as the author of the Pentateuch.* Not to multiply texts, for in such a case one is as good as a thousand, we will take a decisive passage in the fourth Gospel:--

> * Matthew xix. 7, 8; Mark x. 3, 4; xii. 26; Luke xvi. 29-31; Luke xx. 37; John v. 45, 46; vii. 19, 22, 23.

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v. 45-47).

The speaker in this instance is Christ himself. It is he, and not the evangelist, who speaks of the writings of Moses, and declares that Moses "wrote of me."

Now let us turn to the book of Psalms, which has been well called the Hymn Book of the Second Temple. According to Dr. Farrar, they are "a collection of sacred poems in five separate books of very various antiquity." Canon Driver points out that they are mostly posterior to the prophetical writings. "When the Psalms," he says, "are compared with the prophets, the latter seem to show, on the whole, the greater originality; the psalmists, in other words, _follow_ the prophets, appropriating and applying the truths which the prophets proclaimed." Very few of the Psalms are earlier than the seventh century before Christ. Dr. Driver affirms this with "tolerable confidence." Dr. Farrar says that "some may mount to an epoch earlier than David's," but this is mere conjecture. The more cautious Dr. Driver will not commit himself further than "a verdict of _non liquet_"; that is to say, there is no proof that David did not write one or two of the Psalms, and no evidence that he did. His name was associated with the collection, in the same way as the name of Solomon was associated with the Proverbs. Nevertheless it is David who is referred to by Jesus as the author of the hundred-and-tenth Psalm.* But this Psalm is one of those which are allowed to belong to a much later period. Jesus quoted it as David's, but Professor Sanday says "it seems difficult to believe it really came from him"**--which is as strong an expression as a Christian divine

could be expected to permit himself in a case of such delicacy.

* Matthew xxii. 43-45; Mark xii. 36, 37; Luke xx. 42-44.

** Professor W. Sanday, Bampton Lectures on Inspiration, p. 409. Canon Gore, with this utterance of Jesus right before him, still more emphatically denies that this Psalm was, or could have been, composed by David. See his Bampton Lectures on The Incarnation of the Son of God, p. 197.

We have already seen that the book of Daniel was not written by the prophet Daniel, but by some unknown author hundreds of years later, probably in the second century before Christ. Upon this subject Professor Sanday takes precisely the same view as Canon Driver. He says that this is "the critical view" and has "won the day." All the facts support the "supposition that the book was written in the second century b.c.," and not "in the sixth." "The real author," he says, "is unknown," and "the name of Daniel is only assumed." He was writing, not a history, but a homily, to encourage his brethren at the time of the Maccabean struggle. "To this purpose of his," Professor Sanday says, "there were features in the traditional story of Daniel which appeared to lend themselves; and so he took that story and worked it up in the way which seemed to him most effective." Jesus Christ, however, held the orthodox view of his own time, and spoke of Daniel as the actual author of this book (Matthew xxiv. 15). "But this," Professor Sanday observes, "it is right to say, is only in one Gospel, where the mention of Daniel may be an insertion of the Evangelist's." Such conjectural shifts are Christian critics reduced to in their effort to minimise difficulties; as though _reducing_ the mistakes of Jesus in any way saved his _infallibility_.

We will now turn to some portions of the Old Testament narrative which the Higher Criticism regards as legendary, but which Jesus regarded as strictly historical. One of these is the story of the Flood. No one of any standing is now prepared to defend this story, at least as we find it in the book of Genesis. A few orthodox scientists, like Sir James W. Dawson, pour out copious talk about tremendous floods in former geological ages; but what has this to do with the Bible narrative of a universal deluge which occurred some four thousand five hundred years ago? The Higher Critics have the impatience of Freethinkers with such intellectual charlatanry. They regard the story of the Flood as a Jewish legend, which was not even original, but borrowed from the superstitions of Babylon. Yet the opinion of Jesus Christ seems to have been very different. Here are his own words:--

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew xxiv. 37-39).

Jesus Christ appears to have believed, like the disciples he was addressing, like all the rest of his countrymen, and like nearly all Christians until very recently, that the Flood was an historical occurrence, that Noah and his family were saved in the ark, and that all the other inhabitants of the world were drowned.

Another story which the Higher Criticism dismisses as legendary is that of Jonah. The book in which it is related was, of course, not written by Jonah, the son of Amittai, of whom we read in 2 Kings xiv. 25, and who lived in the reign of Jeroboam II. "It cannot," as Dr. Driver says, "have been written until long after the lifetime of Jonah himself." Its probable date is the fifth century before Christ. Dr. Driver says it is "not strictly historical "--that is to say, the events recorded in it

never happened. Jonah was not really entertained for three days in a whale's belly, nor did his preaching convert the whole city of Nineveh. The writer's purpose was didactic; he wished to rebuke the exclusiveness of his own people, and to teach them that God's care extended, at least occasionally, to other nations as well as the Jews. Some critics, such as Cheyne and Wright, regard the story as allegorical; Jonah standing for Israel, the whale for Babylon, and the vomiting up of the prophet for the return of the Jews from exile. Dr. Farrar draws attention to the "remarkable" fact that in the book of Kings "no allusion is made to any mission or adventure of the historic Jonah." He adds that there is not "the faintest trace of his mission or its results amid the masses of Assyrian inscriptions." Even the writer of the book of Jonah, according to Dr. Farrar, attached "no importance" to its "supernatural incidents," which "only belong to the allegorical form of the story." So much for the Higher Critics; and now let us hear Jesus Christ:--

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here" (Matthew xii. 39-41).

This utterance of Jesus is also reported in Luke (xi. 29-32), but with an important variation, the reference to Jonah in the whale's belly being entirely omitted. This variation is seized upon by Dr. Farrar. The fishy reference, he says, occurs in Matthew _alone_, and it may "represent a comment or marginal note by the Evangelist, or of some other Christian teacher." This, however, is an arbitrary supposition, which everyone is free to repudiate; and Dr. Farrar feels obliged to add that "even if our Lord did allude to the whale" it does not follow that we should regard it as "literal history." But this is not the question at issue. The real question is, did Jesus Christ believe the story of Jonah and the whale? If he did not, it must be admitted that he had a most unfortunate way of expressing himself.

No educated Christian in the present age believes the story of Lot's wife being changed into a pillar of rock salt, although Josephus pretended that he had seen it, and many travellers and pilgrims have searched for it as a sacred relic. Jesus Christ, however, gave great prominence to this salted lady. "Remember Lot's wife" is a verse by itself in the Protestant Bible (Luke xvii. 32). Jesus also refers to the rain of fire and brimstone by which Sodom was destroyed.

Here then, upon the face of it, we have Jesus Christ's testimony to three documents as having been written by men who did not write them, and to the historical character of three incidents which are purely fabulous. Now the Higher Criticism must be wrong, or else Jesus Christ was mistaken; in other words, he was not infallible, and therefore not God. But the Higher Critics declare that they are not wrong; they also declare that Jesus Christ was not mistaken. Let us see how they try to save their own accuracy and his infallibility.

We must remark, in passing, that some of these critics hint, without exactly asserting, that Jesus _may_ have been mistaken. Dr. Farrar bids us remember that "by the very fact of taking our nature upon him Christ voluntarily submitted himself to human limitations." There were some things which, as a man, he did not know. Yes, but he was also God; and the conjunction of "knowledge" and "ignorance" in one person, and with respect to a single subject, would dissolve the unity of the God-man, which is a dogma of Christian theology. Moreover, as Canon Liddon argued, it is not so much a question of Christ's omniscience as a question of his infallibility. Supposing there were some matters, such

as the date of the day of judgment, of which he was ignorant; he might confess his ignorance or remain silent, and no harm would accrue to anyone; but if he spoke upon any matter, and was mistaken through want of knowledge, he would become a propagator of error; and this would not only destroy the doctrine of his deity, but very seriously impair his authority as a teacher, and cause everything he said to be open to the gravest suspicion. No less dangerous is it to fall back upon the explanation that "the discourses of Christ are not reproduced by the Evangelists with verbal identity"--to use Dr. Farrar's own language. Dr. Sanday seems a little attracted by this explanation. He reminds us that, whatever views Jesus himself entertained as to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, his views have come down to us through the medium of persons who shared the erroneous ideas that were then current on the subject. We must be prepared, he says, for the possibility that Christ's sayings in regard to it "have not been reported with absolute accuracy." But after all "not much allowance" should be made for this; which means, we suspect, that the worthy Professor saw the dreadful peril of pursuing this vein of observation, and desisted from it before he had said enough to cause serious mischief.

The more astute Higher Critics avoid such dangers. They resort to a theory that combines mystery and plausibility, by which they hope to satisfy believers on both sides of their natures. Dr. Farrar tells us that Christ, to become a man, emptied himself of his glory; and that this "examination" involved the necessity of speaking as a man to men. This position is perhaps best expressed by Canon Gore:--

"It is contrary to his whole method to reveal his Godhead by any anticipations of natural knowledge. The Incarnation was a self-emptying of God to reveal himself under conditions of human nature, and from the human point of view. We are able to draw a distinction between what he revealed and what he used.....Now when he speaks of the 'sun rising' he is using ordinary human knowledge. Thus he does not reveal his eternity by statements as to what had happened in the past, or was to happen in the future, outside the ken of existing history. He made his Godhead gradually manifest by his attitude towards men and things about him, by his moral and spiritual claims, by his expressed relation to his father, not by any miraculous exemptions of himself from the conditions of natural knowledge in its own proper province. Thus the utterances of Christ about the Old Testament do not seem to be nearly definite or clear enough to allow of our supposing that in this case he is departing from the general method of the Incarnation, by bringing to bear the unveiled omniscience of the Godhead, to anticipate or foreclose a development of natural knowledge."*

This would perhaps be sublime if it were only intelligible. We are not surprised at Dr. Driver's turning away from the metaphysics of this theory. His mind is cast in a more sober and practical mould. It is enough for him that the aim of Christ's teaching was a religious one; that he naturally accepted, as the basis of his teaching, the opinions respecting the Old Testament that were current around him; that he did not raise "issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of his life."**

* Rev. Charles Gore, Lux Mundi (seventh edition), pp. 360, 361.

** Introduction, Preface, xix.

This is excellently said. It is just what Paley might have written in present-day circumstances. But it contains no note of the supernatural. It deals with Jesus as a mere man, who did not disclose all the

information he possessed, but sometimes veiled his knowledge for temporary reasons. It leaves his Godhead in the background. It does not recognise how easy it was for Omnipotence to act differently. And when the Higher Criticism points out that the human mind could, in the course of time, free itself from errors as to the authorship and credibility of the Old Testament, it forgets that Jesus Christ, by accommodating himself to those errors, _perpetuated_ them. His authority was appealed to for centuries--it is appealed to now--in favor of falsehood. Nor is this falsehood trivial and innocuous. It has been extremely harmful. It has fostered a wrong view of the Bible, it has prolonged the reign of superstition, and thus hindered the growth of true civilisation. This is an impeachment of the moral character of Jesus. It is a confession that he served a temporary object at the expense of the permanent interests of humanity. We feel constrained, therefore, to admit the force of the words of Canon Liddon:--

"We have lived to hear men proclaim the legendary and immoral character of considerable portions of those Old Testament scriptures, upon which our Lord has set the seal of his infallible authority. And yet, side by side with this rejection of Scriptures so deliberately sanctioned by Christ, there is an unwillingness which, illogical as it is, we must sincerely welcome, to profess any explicit rejection of the Church's belief in Christ's divinity. Hence arises the endeavour to intercept a conclusion, which might otherwise have seemed so plain as to make arguments in its favor an intellectual impertinence. Hence a series of singular refinements, by which Christ is presented to the modern world as really Divine, yet as subject to fatal error; as Founder of the true religion, yet as the credulous patron of a volume replete with worthless legends; as the highest Teacher and Leader of humanity, yet withal as the ignorant victim of the prejudices and follies of an unenlightened age."*

> * Canon H. P. Liddon, The Divinity of Christ (fourteenth edition), p. 462.

Canon Gore devotes several pages of his Bampton Lectures to this subject, but he does not fairly answer the straightforward objections raised by Canon Liddon. Dealing with the references of Jesus to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and to Jonah's three days' entombment in the whale's belly, and with the argument that this endorsement by Jesus "binds us to receive these narratives as simple history," he blandly declares, "To this argument I do not think that we need yield." Of course not. There is no need to yield to anything you do not like; for this is a free country, at least to Christians. But what is the logical conclusion? That is the point to be decided. Canon Gore does not face it; he merely expresses a personal disinclination. Subsequently he pleads that "a heavy burden" should not be laid on "sensitive consciences," and that men should not be asked "to accept as matter of revelation what seems to them an improbable literary theory." But this again is a personal appeal. These men must be left to attend to their own consciences. They have no right to demand a suppression of truth, or a perversion of logic, for their particular advantage.

When a candid reader has finished all that the Higher Criticism has to say on this matter, we believe he will be filled with a sense of its insincerity. It never strikes a note of triumph, or even a note of conviction. It is timid, furtive, and apologetic; and shelters itself against reason by plunging into mystery. In place of all the difficulties it removes it sets up a colossal one of its own manufacture; the difficulty, to wit, of conceiving that God himself lent a sanction to grave and far-reaching error as to his own Word; or what would inevitably be regarded as a sanction, and would necessarily delay for many hundreds of years the discovery and reception of the truth. The Higher Criticism, in short, has supplied a new argument against the

deity of Jesus Christ.

X. THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Dr. Farrar's book has naturally given offence to the more orthodox Christians. Clergymen like "Father" Ignatius stigmatise him, and indeed all clerical exponents of the Higher Criticism, as wolves in sheeps' clothing, who eat the Church's meat and do the work of "infidelity." We are not surprised, therefore, that some reassurance has been deemed necessary; nor astonished that it took the form of a popular announcement in the newspapers. Some months ago--to be accurate, it was in September--the following paragraph went the round of the press:--

"Dean Farrar and the Scriptures.--A correspondent called the attention of Dean Farrar to the fact that Atheistic lecturers are in the habit of affirming that he does not believe in the Bible (referring to his works as a confirmation of the statement), and observed that, if such a grave assertion were allowed to be propagated without contradiction, the young and the ignorant might be deceived by it. The Dean, who is at present staying in Yorkshire, replied as follows: 'The statement to which you refer is ignorant nonsense. The doctrine of the Church of England about Holy Scripture is stated in her Sixth and Seventh. Articles, and that doctrine I most heartily accept."

This strikes us as a rather paltry evasion. The Sixth and Seventh Articles of the Church of England do not state the full Christian belief as to the Bible, but only the Protestant belief as against that of the Church of Rome. They emphasise two points, and two points only: first, that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation, so that no man is at the Pope's mercy for a seat in heaven; second, that fourteen books of the Roman Catholic Bible are apocryphal, and cannot be used to establish any doctrine. The general Christian view of the Bible, common to Catholics and Protestants, is taken for granted, as it had not then been brought into controversy. There is one word in the Sixth Article, however, which may be commended to Dr. Farrar's attention. The last clause explains what is meant by "Holy Scripture," and runs as follows:--"In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." Now, unless Dr. Farrar means to juggle with the word "authority"--and we do not doubt his capacity for doing so--it is idle for him to say that he believes in the Bible according to these terms. He does _not_ believe, for instance, in the "authority" of the book of Jonah; on the contrary, he believes that Jonah did not write it, and that it is not history, but romance, from beginning to end. If _this_ is believing in the Bible, then Atheistic lecturers believe in it as well as Dr. Farrar. He does not believe that Jonah spent three days in a whale's belly--nor do they; he does not believe that Jonah's deep-sea adventure was a prefigurement of the burial of Jesus Christ--nor do they; he does not believe that the Jonah story is any the truer because Jesus Christ really or apparently believed it--nor do they; he simply believes that the story's moral is a good one, as far as it represents people who are not Jews as entitled to consideration--and so do they. Substantially there is not the smallest difference between them. The only discernible difference is a hypothetical one. Dr. Farrar claims that the book of Jonah is inspired. But he also claims that everything good and true--that is, everything worth reading--is inspired. "Very well then," the Atheist may reply, "I agree with you still, in substance. The only point in dispute between us is whether there is a God who interferes with the natural course of things, either in the external world or in the human mind. But on your definition of the word _inspired_, this makes no particular difference to any one book

or collection of books. And unless you alter (and narrow) your theory of inspiration, our difference begins outside, not inside, the library--and is, in brief, not practical, but metaphysical."

But let us return to Dr. Farrar's method of proving his sufficient orthodoxy; and let us tell him that if he will only pursue it far enough, he may get rid of the Bible altogether.

Suppose we take Pearson's classic _Exposition of the Creed_, and open it at his address "to the Reader." In the second paragraph he writes as follows:--"The Creed, without controversy, is a brief comprehension of the objects of our Christian faith, and is generally taken to contain all things necessary to be believed." Now this Creed does not mention the Bible at all. A heathen might read it, and never infer from it that there was such a thing as the Scriptures in existence. What then is to prevent Dr. Farrar, or some more audacious clergyman, from saying that he does not believe in the Bible, as it is nowhere laid down as necessary to be believed; but that his orthodoxy is nevertheless unimpeachable, because he "most heartily accepts" the Catholic and Apostolic Creed which is "without controversy" an accurate compendium of the Christian faith, and which, being prescribed in the Prayer Book, is of course binding--and is _alone_ binding--on every loyal son of the Church of England?

Dr. Farrar claims, as a clergyman, what he calls a "Christian liberty" in dealing with the Bible; although, if God has indeed spoken in the Bible, it is difficult to see what liberty a Christian can have but that of absolute belief and obedience. In a lengthy footnote of his volume which we have been criticising, he refers to the famous "Essays and Reviews Case," and the decisions of the judges in the Court of Arches and in the Privy Council. Dr. Lushington laid it down that: "Provided the Articles and Formularies are not contravened, the law lays down no limits of construction, no rule of interpretation, of the Scriptures." Lord Westbury declared that the Sixth Article of the Church of England was based upon "the revelations of the Holy Spirit," and therefore the Bible might be denominated "holy" and be said to be "the Word of God"; but this was not "distinctly predicated of every statement and representation contained in every part of the Old and New Testaments." "The framers of the Articles," Lord Westbury added, "have not used the word 'inspiration' as applied to the Holy Scriptures, nor have they laid down anything as to the nature, extent, or limits of that operation of the Holy Spirit."

According to this sapient judgment, which perhaps is very good law, and covers all possible developments of the Higher Criticism, every member of the Church of England is bound to regard the Bible as containing "the revelations of the Holy Spirit," but is not bound to regard it as a work of "inspiration." A judge, with his legal spectacles on, is notoriously able to discriminate subtleties where laymen see only what is plain; and clergymen may take advantage of his preternatural sagacity, without being able in the long run to impose upon the common sense of the people, who will always look upon "revelation" and "inspiration" as interchangeable terms.

It is quite natural that Dr. Farrar should wish to get rid of this word "inspiration," since it can no longer be defined without danger. But we must remind him that, if it does not occur in the Church Articles, it certainly does occur in the Bible. "All scripture," Paul said, "is given by inspiration of God."*

* Timothy iii. 16.

And as the New Testament was not then in existence, Paul of course

referred to the Old Testament. This was the "holy scriptures" which Timothy had "known from a child." And Peter is, if possible, more definite than Paul. He speaks of the "more sure word of prophecy," surer than the very voice heard by the three disciples on the mount of transfiguration. This "prophecy of the scripture" he declares to be never of "any private interpretation"--which means, according to the commentators, that it did not spring from any knowledge or personal conjecture in the prophet. Finally, he clinches his exposition by affirming that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

> * 2 Peter i. 19-21. We quote this epistle as Peter's, because it passes as his in the New Testament, not because it was really his writing.

According to the Sixth Article of the Church of England, both these epistles, bearing the names of Paul and Peter, are among the books "of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." Dr. Farrar is therefore bound by them in logic and honor. He is not free to cast aside the Biblical term of _inspiration_ nor free to minimise as he pleases the "moving" influence of the Holy Ghost in either the New or the Old Testament. As a clergyman of the Church of England, he assumes an unwarrantable freedom; a freedom which is no more sanctioned by her Articles than it is by the letter or spirit of the Scriptures. He departs entirely from the primitive and real position of Protestantism; namely, that the Bible is the absolute standard of faith and practice, and that, wherever it is dark or dubious, it must be interpreted by itself. He treads the _via media_ of compromise and irrationality; neither going over to Rome, which claims to be inspired, like the Bible, and to be the vehicle of the living voice of God for the infallible interpretation of the written revelation--nor going over to Rationalism, which regards the Catholic Church as but a human institution, and the Bible as but a human composition. Believe that God has spoken, according to the words of Paul and Peter, and the Catholic theory is the only satisfactory one; disbelieve it, and there is no logical alternative but the most thoroughgoing Rationalism.

XI. AN ORIENTAL BOOK

Dr. Farrar stumbles, on one occasion, against the true theory of the Bible. Having to furnish an excuse, if not a justification, for the outrageous crudity of a good deal of its language, he reminds us that decorum changes with time and place. "The rigid external modesty and propriety of modern and English literature," he observes, "is disgusted and offended by statements which gave no such shock to ancient and Eastern readers." And he adds that "The plain-spokenness of Orientals involved no necessary offence against abstract morality." This is true enough, but the argument should be developed. What is urged in extenuation of the grossness of the Scripture is really applicable all round--to its mythology, its legends, its religion, its philosophy, its ethics, and its poetry. The Bible is an oriental book. And this one statement, when properly understood, gives us the true key to its interpretation, the real criterion of its character, and the just measure of its value.

It has been well remarked that the ordinary Christian in this part of the world appears to imagine that the Bible dropped down from heaven--in English. Even the expounders of the Higher Criticism, in our own country, read it first in their mother tongue; and although they afterwards read it in the original Greek, and sometimes in the original Hebrew, they are under the witchery of early impressions, and their

apologetics are almost entirely founded upon the vernacular Bible. Thus they lose sight, and their readers never catch a glimpse, of the predominant element, the governing factor, of the problem.

All the Bibles in the world, like all the religions in the world, came from the East. "Not one of them," as Max Mueller remarks, "has been conceived, composed, or written down in Europe."*

* Max Mueller, Natural Religion, p. 538.

He classes the _Pilgrim's Progress_ among the "many books which have exercised a far greater influence on religious faith and moral conduct than the Bibles of the world"; but Bunyan's originality was artistic and not religious; he absorbed the Puritanism of his age, and reproduced it in the form of a magnificent allegory. Religious originality does not belong to the Western mind, which is too scientific and practical. Every one of the fashionable crazes that spring up from time to time, and have their day and give place to a successor, is merely a garment from the old wardrobe of superstition. This is true of Theosophy, for instance; all its doctrines, ideas, and jargon being borrowed from India. "There are five countries only," Max Mueller says, "which have been the birthplace of Sacred Books: (1) India, (2) Persia, (3) China, (4) Palestine, (5) Arabia." All come from the East, and all have a generic and historic resemblance. Not one of them was written by the founder of its religion. Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Christ did not write a line of the New Testament, Mohammed did not write the Koran, Zoroaster did not write the Avesta, the Buddhist Scriptures were not written by Buddha, and the Vedic hymns are far more ancient than writing in India. All these Sacred Books embody the accepted beliefs of whole peoples; all of them are canonical and authoritative; all contain very much the same ethical groundwork, in the form of elementary moral prohibitions; all of them are held to be of divine character; all of them become a kind of fetish, which is worshipped and obeyed at the expense of the free spirit of man, who is told not to be wise above what is written. Ecclesiastical or kingly authority has generally given these books their final form and character. Their establishment takes place in open daylight, but their origin is more or less shrouded in mystery. "It is curious," Max Mueller says, "that wherever we have sacred books, they represent to us the oldest language of the country. It is so in India, it is the same in Persia, in China, in Palestine, and very nearly so in Arabia."* According to Max Mueller, the Veda was referred to in India fifteen hundred years before Christ. Consequently it precedes by many centuries even the earliest parts of the Bible:--

"The Vedic hymns come to us as a collection of sacred poetry, belonging to certain ancient families, and afterwards united in one collection, called the Rig-veda-sa_m_hita. The names of the poets, handed down by tradition, are in most cases purely imaginary names. What is really important is that in the hymns themselves the poets speak of their thoughts and words as _God-given_--this we can understand--while at a later time the theory came in that not the thoughts and words only, but every syllable, every letter, every accent, had been communicated to half-divine and half-human prophets by Brahma, so that the slightest mistake in pronunciation, even to the pronunciation of an accent, would destroy the charm and efficacy of these ancient prayers."**

* Natural Religion, p. 295.

** Max Mueller, ibid, p. 558.

With a slight variation of language, to suit the special circumstances, nearly all this would apply to the Bible.

Christianity, like Brahmanism, like Buddhism, like Mohammedanism, is a

book religion. It is "God-given," or revealed, and its Bible has been elevated to a position of infallibility, above the reach of human reason, precisely like the Bibles of other oriental faiths. This sanctification of every thought and word and letter is declared by Max Mueller to have been "the death-blow given to the Vedic religion," destroying its power of growth and change. A similar observation is made by Sir William Muir respecting the petrified gospel of the Koran:--

"From the stiff and rigid shroud in which it is thus swathed, the religion of Mohammed cannot emerge. It has no plastic power beyond that exercised in its earliest days. Hardened now and inelastic, it can neither adapt itself nor yet shape its votaries, nor even suffer them to shape themselves, to the varying circumstances, the wants and developments of mankind."*

How curious it is, after reading this strong passage, to come across a diametrically opposite one in the work of another eminent writer on the same subject. Professor Arnold closes his important book on the propagation of the Muslim faith with a reference to "the power of this religion to adapt itself to the peculiar characteristics and the stage of development of the people whose allegiance it seeks to win."** Historically, it is perfectly certain that Mohammedanism _has_ been found compatible with a high degree of civilisation. Many instances might be given, but a single one is sufficient. The Mohammedan civilisation in Spain was far superior to the Christian civilisation which, after terrible bloodshed and enormous destruction, was established upon its ruins. The truth is, that religions always change when they must change, and never otherwise. When the necessity arises, learned divines will always be found to make the requisite accommodations. This, indeed, is the explanation of the labors of Dr. Farrar and other exponents of the Higher Criticism. They are simply accommodating Christianity, and the Bible with it, to the serious changes that have taken place in educated opinion and sentiment, in consequence of the development of physical science, the progress of historical criticism, and the growth of moral culture. All the truth in Sir William Muir's impeachment of Mohammedanism is no less applicable to Christianity. The Bible, like the Koran, and like every other revelation, stereotyped old ideas, and gave them a factitious longevity. Dr. Farrar himself not only admits, but contends, that the Bible has been invoked against every advance in science, politics, and sociology. What more could be said of the Koran or any other sacred book?

* Sir William Muir, Rise and Decline of Islam, pp. 40, 41.

** T. W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam.

Bring any oriental religion into Europe, and it must change or perish. Christianity is not true, as Mr. Gladstone and so many orthodox apologists have argued, because the Christian nations are at the top of civilisation. The Caucasian mind led the world before the advent of Christianity, and it is doing the same now. Christians are apt to forget that Greece and Italy are in Europe, and that Athens and Rome--two imperishable names in the world's history--were far-shining cities before a good deal of the Old Testament was written.

Keep any oriental religion in the East, however, and there is no saying how long it will last unaltered. Do not travellers talk of the unchanging East? The civilisation of China is almost what it was thousands of years ago. Syrian life to-day is like a picture from the Bible. And the old Orient, as Flaubert said, is the land of religions; and where Asia looks upon Europe, and the communication between them began of yore, you may sample all the faiths of antiquity. Flaubert remarked that the assemblage of all the old religions in Syria was something incredible; it was enough to study for centuries.*

* Flaubert, Correspondence, vol. i., p. 344.

Asia spawned forth all the great religions, and produced all the great revelations. Arabia is in Africa, but the Arabs are not Africans; they belong to the Semitic race, like the Jews, and the Koran embodies Jewish and other Semitic traditions.

The Bible, then, is an oriental book, an Asiatic book, in spite of the Greek elements which are incorporated in the New Testament, notably in the fourth Gospel. It has never been in harmony with the real life of the West. When it has dominated the life of a particular locality, for a certain period, the result has been something typically non-European; as in the case of Scotland under the despotism of the Kirk, whose spiritual slaves prompted Heine's epigram that the Presbyterian Scotchman was a Jew, born in the north, who ate pork. Modern civilisation is mainly a return to the spirit of secular progress which inspired the immortal achievements of Greece and Rome.

"The revival of learning and the Renaissance are memorable as the first sturdy breasting by humanity of the hither slope of the great hollow which lies between us and the ancient world. The modern man, reformed and regenerated by knowledge, looks across it, and recognises on the opposite ridge, in the far-shining cities and stately porticoes, in the art, politics, and science of antiquity, many more ties of kinship and sympathy than in the mighty concave between, wherein dwell his Christian ancestry, in the dim light of scholasticism and theology."*

* James Cotter Morison, The Service of Man, p. 178.

Well, if we once fully recognise the Bible as an oriental book, we are on the road to its complete comprehension. Its grossness of speech, its gratuitous reference to animal functions, its designation of males by their sexual attributes even on the most serious occasions, its religious observances in connection with pregnancy and birth, its very rite of circumcision; all this, and much more, becomes perfectly intelligible. It is in keeping with all we know of the ideas, practices, and language of the East. Moreover, we perceive why it is that similarities to the theology, the poetry, and the ethics of the Bible have been so liberally disclosed by the progress of oriental studies. The Bible, being brought from the East, has to be carried back there to be properly understood. It is true that Christian divines have offered their own explanation of these similarities. At first they declared them to be Satanic anticipations, devilish pre-mockeries, of God's own truth. Then they declared them to be confused echoes of the oracles of Jehovah. Finally, they declare them to be evidences of the fact that, although God chose the Jewish race as the medium of his special revelation, he also revealed himself partially to other nations. But these explanations are alike fantastic. They rest upon no ground of history or evolution. The real explanation is that the Bible is one of the many sacred books of the East. Its differences from the rest are not of kind, but of degree; and any superiority that may be claimed for it must henceforth be argued upon this basis.

This oriental Bible is at utter variance with the vital beliefs, the political and social tendencies, and the ethical aspirations, of the present age. Science has destroyed its naive supernaturalism; reason has placed its personal God--the magnified, non-natural man--in his own niche in the world's Pantheon; philosophy has carried us far beyond its primitive conceptions of human society; our morality has outgrown its hardness and insularity, however we may still appreciate its finer ejaculations; even the most pious Christians, with the exception of a few "peculiar" people, only pay a hypocritical homage to its clearest injunctions; and the higher development of decency and propriety makes

us turn from its crude expressions with a growing sense of disgust, while the progress of humanity fills us more and more with a loathing of its frightful wars and ruthless massacres, its tales of barbaric cruelty, and its crowning infamy of an everlasting hell.

XII. FICTITIOUS SUPREMACY

There are two remarkable characteristics of present-day apologies for Christianity: one is extravagant laudation of Jesus as man and teacher, the other is extravagant laudation of the Bible as ethics and literature. Both these characteristics are really signs of the decadence of positive faith. Anyone who sincerely believed in the deity of Jesus would shrink from praising his human virtues. To such a person it would savor strongly of impertinence. Nor would anyone who really believed the Bible to be the Word of God make it the subject of meaner panegyrics. It seems ridiculous to argue that God wrote with unusual power and sublimity, and is actually the very first of known authors. But this is what Dr. Farrar does, essentially, in the last six chapters of his volume. No wonder, therefore, that all the vices of his style are displayed in the accomplishment of this extraordinary task. He has to make several quotations from great or distinguished writers, but he catches no literary infection from them. One of these quotations is from brave old George Fox. "I saw," the great Quaker wrote, "that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of Light and Love flowed over the ocean of Darkness; and in that I saw the infinite love of God." This is magnificent writing. It has vision, force, and simplicity. In its way it could hardly be beaten. And how poor in comparison is the turgid pulpit rhetoric of Dr. Farrar!

We are told by this wordy defender of the faith that the Christian Scriptures are "the Supreme Bible of Humanity"--as though, if it be the Word of God, it could be anything less. Our attention is called to its "unique transcendence"--which is a penny-a-lining pleonasm. We are informed that it has "triumphed with ease over the assaults of its enemies"--which is a remarkably modest assertion, especially in view of the fact that the "enemies" of the Bible were, for fifteen hundred years, generally subdued by persecution, imprisonment, torture, assassination, and the burning of their writings. We are further informed that the Bible commands the reverence, guides the thoughts, educates the souls, and kindles the moral aspirations of men "through all the world"--which is an extremely sober statement in view of the fact that all the _nominal_ Christians, not to be too precise about the _real_ ones, do not amount to more than a fourth of the world's inhabitants. So wonderful a book is the Bible that "the Lord Jesus Christ himself did not disdain to quote from the Old Testament"--which was his own word, in the sense that it was (professedly) written under divine inspiration. This is absurd enough, but it is nothing to the rapturous eulogy of the Bible which follows it. "All the best and brightest English verse [not _some_, mark, but _all!_], from the poems of Chaucer to the plays of Shakespeare in their noblest parts, are echoes of its lessons; and from Cowper to Wordsworth," Dr. Farrar says, "from Coleridge to Tennyson, the greatest of our poets have drawn from its pages their loftiest wisdom." Really, one is tempted to ask whether such stuff as this is possible in any other country than England, or perhaps America; and whether, even in England or America, it is possible outside churches, chapels, and Sunday-schools. Sixty pages later--Dr. Farrar could not sober down in that long interval--he declares that "It was the Bible which created the prose literature of England." Now if this were true it would not serve Dr. Farrar's ostensible purpose. It would not prove that the Bible is a divine revelation. It would only prove the historical--that is to say, the largely accidental--importance of

the Authorised Version of the Bible in the development of English literature. But this declaration of Dr. Farrar's is _not_ true. The Authorised Version did not initiate, it rather closed, a period of our literary history. The English of the translators in their Preface is vastly different from the English of their translation. Indeed, they were rather collators than translators. They took the older versions as the basis of their work, they altered as little as possible, and the alterations they did make were strictly in harmony with the time-honored style of those older versions, a style which was even then very archaic. Dr. Marsh, himself a devout Christian, contends that "the dialect of this translation was not, at the time of the revision, or, indeed, at any other period, the actual current book-language nor the colloquial speech of the English people." He maintains that it was "a consecrated diction" which had been "gradually built up" from the time of Wycliffe.* Its language was not the language of Chaucer's prose, nor even of Wycliffe's own prose, any more than it was the language of Bacon's or Shakespeare's, or even that of divines like Hooker. The Authorised Version is indeed a monument of English, but of special English. It has always stood aside from the main development of English prose. Of course it has exercised a considerable influence, but that influence has been chiefly indirect. From the young naive prose of Malory to the mature and calculated prose of Swift--not to come farther--there is a clear stream of development, to which the language and style of the English Bible have contributed infinitely less than is generally assumed. With the single exception of Bunyan's masterpiece, which stands apart and alone, it is difficult to name a first-class prose competition that was greatly indebted to our Authorised Version. Even the divines disregarded it as a literary model, and perhaps most conspicuously so in the seventeenth century, immediately after its publication.

> * George P. Marsh, Lectures on the English Language (Murray), pp. 441, 445.

Dr. Farrar is entirely wrong in declaring that the Bible created the prose literature of England. Even if he only means that English prose was vastly profited by the religious literature which followed upon the heels of the Reformation, it is easy to reply that this literature was mainly controversial and never remarkable for the higher graces and dexterities. For those virtues, prior to the time of Taylor and South, we must turn to secular and even to "profane" compositions; a fact which is well known to every real student of English literature.

The next device of Dr. Farrar's advocacy would be astounding if one did not know the muddle-headed public for whom he writes. He devotes a monstrous number of pages to the citing of a "cloud of witnesses to the glory and supremacy of the Holy Scriptures," beginning with the great John Henry Newman and winding up with the notorious Hall Caine. Sandwiched between these dissimilar "witnesses" are Heine, Goethe, Rousseau, Wesley, Emerson, Carlyle, Huxley, Arnold, Ruskin, and a host of others. Most of them were Christians, and afford a partisan testimony which is not very valuable. In any case, there is no real argument in a list of names. When a man is being tried on a definite charge, it is idle to recite a catalogue of his distinguished friends. Witnesses to character are only heard in mitigation of sentence after the jury has returned a verdict of Guilty. Perhaps this fact had its influence on Dr. Farrar's mind; at any rate, he calls his "cloud of witnesses" when he has ended all he had to say in the form of argument.

These witnesses, moreover, are jumbled together without the slightest discrimination. Let us take a few illustrations to show the futility of Dr. Farrar's method.

John Wesley cried "Give me the book of God! Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book." Yes, and John Wesley believed in

witchcraft, and honestly declared that to throw over witchcraft was to throw over the Bible. He had, also, his own way of proving "the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures." He wrote a "Clear and Concise Demonstration," from which we take the following extract:--

"I beg leave to propose a short, clear, and strong argument to prove the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

"The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

"(1) It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,' when it was their own invention.

"(2) It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.

"(3) Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration."*

* John Wesley's Works (1865), vol. xi., pp. 464-465.

Could anything be more childish than this ridiculous play upon the word "invention," and this absurd supposition that "good men" and "bad men" are two sharp divisions of the human species? We know that all men are mixtures, and that honest men may be mistaken, and tell falsehoods without lying. We are therefore able to measure the value of John Wesley's "demonstration" that the Bible is inspired.

John Ruskin thanks his mother for daily reading the Bible with him in his childhood, and daily making him learn a part of it by heart. This is seized upon by Dr. Farrar, who places it in his list of testimonies. But it might have been wise--it would certainly have been honest--to tell the reader how Ruskin views the Bible. This great writer has formulated four theories of the Bible, the third of which he has declared to be "for the last half-century the theory of the soundest scholars and thinkers in Europe." And what is this theory? Here it is in Ruskin's own words:--

"That the mass of religious Scripture contains merely the best efforts which we hitherto know to have been made by any of the races of men towards the discovery of some relations with the spiritual world; that they are only trustworthy as expressions of the enthusiastic visions or beliefs of earnest men oppressed by the world's darkness, and have no more authoritative claim on our faith than the religious speculations and histories of the Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, and Indians; but are, in common with all these, to be reverently studied, as containing a portion, divinely appointed, of the best wisdom which the human intellect, earnestly seeking for help from God, has hitherto been able to gather between birth and death."*

* Time and Tide, pp. 48, 49. It should be noted that the Letters in this pregnant little volume were written by Ruskin as far back as 1867.

Surely this is a very different view of the Bible from the one which is presented by Dr. Farrar. Setting aside a little religious phraseology, a Freethinker might endorse Ruskin's theory of the Bible. Everything is substantially granted to the Freethinker when it is admitted that the Bible has "no authoritative claim on our faith." Whatever truth and beauty it contains may then be thankfully accepted.

Professor Huxley's famous eulogy of the Bible, as a book to be read in Board Schools, is made the most of by Dr. Farrar. He must have winced, however, at Huxley's reference to what a sensible teacher would "eliminate" as "not desirable for children to occupy themselves with." He was not sensitive enough to wince at the statement that "even the noble Stoic, Marcus Antoninus, is too high and refined for an ordinary child"--which is virtually a testimonial in his favor for grown-up men and women. Dr. Farrar crows lustily over what he calls "Professor Huxley's testimony to the unique glory of the Scriptures." It is perhaps well for him that Huxley is incapable of resenting this misrepresentation. Still, it must be admitted that on this occasion, as on one or two others, Huxley did gratuitously play into the hands of the enemy. He might have known the kind of use they would make of his "graceful concessions."

Dr. Farrar had not the honesty to tell his readers that Huxley had the most sovereign contempt for _his_ theory of the Bible. The great Agnostic held, for instance, that "belief in a demonic world" is inculcated throughout the New Testament, and that this belief is "totally devoid of foundation." He declared that Inspiration, in the school of the Higher Criticism, is "deprived of its old intelligible sense," and is "watered down into a mystification." He laughed at the miracles of the Gospels, and made great fun of the story of the bedevilled Gadarean swine. He held that religion and morality have really no necessary connection, and sneered at the "supernaturalists"--gentlemen like Dr. Farrar--who took to patronising morality when they saw its importance, and "have ever since tried to persuade mankind that the existence of ethics is bound up with that of supernaturalism."*

To accept a testimonial from such a writer is abject on the part of a clergyman defending the inspiration of the Bible; and to parade it is simply contemptible. More than fifty years ago, when this petty trick of Christian apologetics was coming into vogue, it was rebuked by Newman, who disdained as "unworthy" the practice of "boasting of the admissions of infidels concerning the beauty or utility of the Christian system, as though," he added with fine sarcasm, "it were a great thing for a divine gift to obtain praise for human excellence."**

> * Huxley, Science and Christian Tradition, pp. xv., 25, 54, etc.
>
> ** John Henry Newman, University Sermons, p. 71.

Dr. Farrar's citation of Matthew Arnold is open to the same kind of criticism. "He retained but little faith in the miraculous," we are told, and "his creed was anything but orthodox." But is it fair to suggest that Arnold had any creed at all? He rejected the idea of a personal God, he regarded Jesus as a merely human teacher, and it is evident from his books and his published correspondence that he had no belief in personal immortality. As for his "faith in the miraculous," it was not "little," with or without the "but"; it was a minus quantity. He positively disbelieved in the miraculous. It was a part of his plain message to the Churches that the reign of the Bible miracles was doomed, that they were all fairy tales, and that, if the fate of the Bible was bound up with theirs, the Bible was doomed too. Arnold said all this when he was living, and it is useless for Dr. Farrar to disguise the fact, or to minimise it by artful phrases. We commend to his attention--would that we could commend it to the attention of his readers!--the following passage from a letter of Arnold's to Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, dated July 22, 1882:--

"The central fact of the situation always remains to me this: that

whereas the basis of things amidst all chance and change has even in Europe generally been for ever so long supernatural Christianity, and far more so in England than in Europe generally, this basis is certainly going--going amidst the full consciousness of the continentals that it is going, and amidst the provincial unconsciousness of the English that it is going."*

* Matthew Arnold, Letters, vol. ii., p. 201.

Considering what Arnold's views really were, is it of any use to make the statement of rather doubtful accuracy that the Bible was his "chief and constant study"? Is it not misleading to talk of his "intense reverence and admiration for the Sacred Books"? He did not regard them as _sacred_. He studied and valued the Bible as literature, not as revelation; and it is monstrous to cite him as a witness in favor of the Bible as it is represented in the school of Dr. Farrar.

We need not waste time over Dr. Farrar's _banal_ remark that Livingstone, Stanley, and the Bible together have caused "the extension of the British protectorate over 170,000 square miles" in a certain part of Africa. We may treat with the same indifference his boast of the millions of copies of the "Sacred Books" distributed by the British and American Bible Societies. Such "evidences" are only fit for the street-corner. Only a low-minded, commercial-sodden Christian could imagine that the multiplication of copies of a book is any sort of testimony to its intrinsic truth and value; and in this particular case the demand is a forced one, depending on the incessant stimulus of the supply.

Another argument of Dr. Farrar's for the "supremacy" of the Bible is based upon the history of Christian martyrdoms. He gives several instances of Christians, old and young, rich and poor, high-placed and humble, who have died for their faith, and entered "the dark river and its still waters with a smile upon their faces." He attributes their fortitude to trust in the promises of the Bible. But he does not tell us how it proves the truth of the Bible either as history or as revelation. Millions of Jews have died at the hands of Christian bigots, and their heroism amidst torture and massacre has never been exceeded in human annals. Does this prove that the New Testament is not a revelation, and that Jesus Christ was not God? Men of other faiths have faced death with sublime courage. Does this prove that their beliefs were accurate? Mohammedans are notoriously ready to die for their religion; the Mohammedan dervishes in the Soudan never quailed before the most murderous storm of shell and bullets; they fell in thousands at Omdurman, and the Khalifa's standard-bearer, when all around him were slain, stood upright under the holy flag, with a smile of defiance on his face, which never left it until he sank shot-riddled upon the heap of his dead comrades. Does this prove that the Koran is the Word of God?

The orthodox argument seems to be this: if a Christian dies for the Bible, that proves it to be a divine book; if a devotee of any other faith dies for his Sacred Scripture. That proves nothing--unless it be the obstinacy of wrong opinions.

There is something intensely comical in the seriousness with which Dr. Farrar relates the martyrdom of Christians who were put to death by other Christians. He does not see that all he gains on one side is lost on the other, that Christian persecution balances Christian fortitude, and that nothing is left to the credit of his account. He devotes a whole page to the murder of Margaret Lachlan and Margaret Wilson by "brutal and tyrannous bigots" at Wigton in 1677. These two women were Covenanting Christians, and their murderers were Episcopalian Christians. They died singing psalms which their murderers believed to be the word of God. It is difficult to see what advantage the Bible

derives from this incident.

One may be interested by the reminder that Oliver Cromwell quoted two verses from the hundred and seventeenth Psalm after his victory at Dunbar; but one may remember on one's own account that David Leslie, the defeated Scots general, was as devout a Christian and Bible-reader as Oliver Cromwell, and that his piety was stimulated by the presence in his camp of a whole congregation of Presbyterian ministers. Altogether it is a pity that Dr. Farrar picks his illustrations in this one-eyed fashion. He forgets that other people may have two eyes, and see on both sides of them. He almost invites the sarcasm that the one-eyed man is only a leader amongst the blind.

The real secret of whatever supremacy belongs to the Bible is to be sought in a different direction. It was long ago remarked by a French Freethinker, in a work attributed to Boulanger, but really written by D'Holbach, that education and authority were the two great pillars of the Christian revelation.

"If a body of men in possession of power, and able to like advantage of the credulity of mankind, were to find their interest concerned in doing so, they would make men believe at the end of a few centuries that the adventures of Don Quixote are perfectly true, and that the prophecies of Nostrodamus have been inspired by God himself. By dint of glosses, of commentaries, and of allegories, it is easy to discover and to prove what one pleases; however glaring an imposture may be, it can be made at last, by the aid of time, cunning, and power, to pass for truth which no one must doubt. Deceivers who are obstinate, and who are supported by public authority, can make ignorant people, who are always credulous, believe anything, especially if they can persuade them that there is merit in not noticing inconsistencies, contradictions, and palpable absurdities, and that there is danger in making use of their reason."*

* Examen Critique de St. Paul, c. 3.

Abolish all the Churches that exist for the purpose of preaching up the Bible as a divine revelation; destroy all the clerical corporations that live and operate upon this basis; take away, at least, the public revenues and special privileges they enjoy; deprive them of the patronage of the legislature and the government; remove their Holy Scriptures from the public schools, where they are retained in defiance of the principles of civil and religious liberty; let little children no longer be suborned in favor of the supernatural claims of this book before they are able to judge for themselves; let the Bible take its own chance with the rest of the world's literature; and then, and not till then, can its natural supremacy be established. But the clergy know that such an experiment would be absolutely fatal to their pretensions. They dare not accept a fair field and no favor. They know in their heart of hearts that they are serving a lie. Their dishonesty is apparent at every turn. Dr. Farrar calls upon England to "cling to her open Bible." Well, the Peculiar People do so. They read the open Bible, they follow its teaching as closely as possible, they obey the commandments of Jesus Christ. And what is the result? They are cast into prison like felons. One of them is suffering that pain and indignity at the present moment.

A good husband, a good father, a good neighbor, a good citizen, he has committed the crime of practically believing what Dr. Farrar and the rest of the clergy facetiously preach--namely, that the Bible is the Book of God, and the divine rule of faith and conduct. For this crime he is imprisoned under the verdict of a Christian jury and the sentence of a Christian judge; and not a single Christian minister raises his voice against this infamous spectacle. Christianity is now only an organised hypocrisy. It subsists upon an inherited fund of power, wealth, and reputation. Even the clergy have no vital belief in the inspiration

of the Bible. It is merely the charter under which they trade. It is a source of oracular texts for their ambiguous sermons. It is lauded and adored, and neglected and defied. To bring it into disbelief and contempt by argument and ridicule is a misdemeanor; to bring it into disbelief and contempt by acting upon it is a felony. The only safe course is that adopted by the clergy, who neither believe it nor disbelieve it, but use it as it serves their occasions; and as long as it answers their ends it will remain the Book of God.

Let us not be misunderstood. We are far from desiring to engage in a crusade against the Bible as a collection of ancient literature. We are neither called upon nor disposed to deny its real merits, however they are exaggerated in religious circles. It undoubtedly contains some fine poetry, occasional pathos, and more frequent sublimity. Its style has nearly always the charm of simplicity. All this may be allowed without playing into the hands of the super-naturalists. Further than this we need not go. In our opinion, it is absurd to place the Bible at the top of human compositions. More than sixty writers are alleged to have contributed to its production, but the whole mass of them do not rival the magnificent and fecund genius of Shakespeare. Above all, they have no wit or humour, in which Shakespeare abounds; and wit and humor belong to the higher development of intellect and emotion. No, the Bible is not the unapproachable masterpiece which it is declared to be by its fanatical devotees. But whatever its intrinsic merits may prove to be, in the light of long and free appreciation, the Bible cannot be accepted as a revelation from God without wilful self-delusion on the part of educated men and women. If God had a message for his children, he would at least make it clear; but this revelation needs another revelation to explain it, and creeds and commentaries are the symbols of its obscurity. God's message would tell us what we could not otherwise learn, but there is no such information in the Bible. God would apprise us of what he specially desired us to remember, and would not mix it confusedly with a tremendous mass of alien matter. God would not puzzle us; he would enlighten us. He would make his communication so clear that a wayfaring man, though a fool, could understand it; whereas, if the Bible be his communication, no wayfaring man, unless he _is_ a fool, pretends to understand it. God would not clog his message with myths, legends, mysteries, absurdities, falsehoods, and filth; and leave us to extricate it with endless labor and perpetual uncertainty. The so-called Higher Criticism is therefore as absurd as the old Orthodoxy in calling the Bible a work of inspiration. Its exponents affirm that God has left us to our own knowledge and reason in regard to every other subject but religion and morality. They are Evolutionists in part. But the principle of Evolution must be applied over the whole field. Everything is natural, and happens under the universal law of causation. There are no miracles, and there never were any except in ignorant imaginations. But the death of miracles is the death of inspiration. The triumph of science involves the ruin of every supernatural system. Revelation is necessarily miraculous, and when the belief in miracles expires the death-knell rings for every Book of God. We are then left to the discipline of culture.

And what is culture? It is steeping our minds in the wisest and loveliest thoughts of all the ages. And each of us may thus make his own Bible for himself--a true Bible of Humanity.

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SALVATION SYRUP

OR

LIGHT

ON

DARKEST ENGLAND.

A REPLY TO

General Booth

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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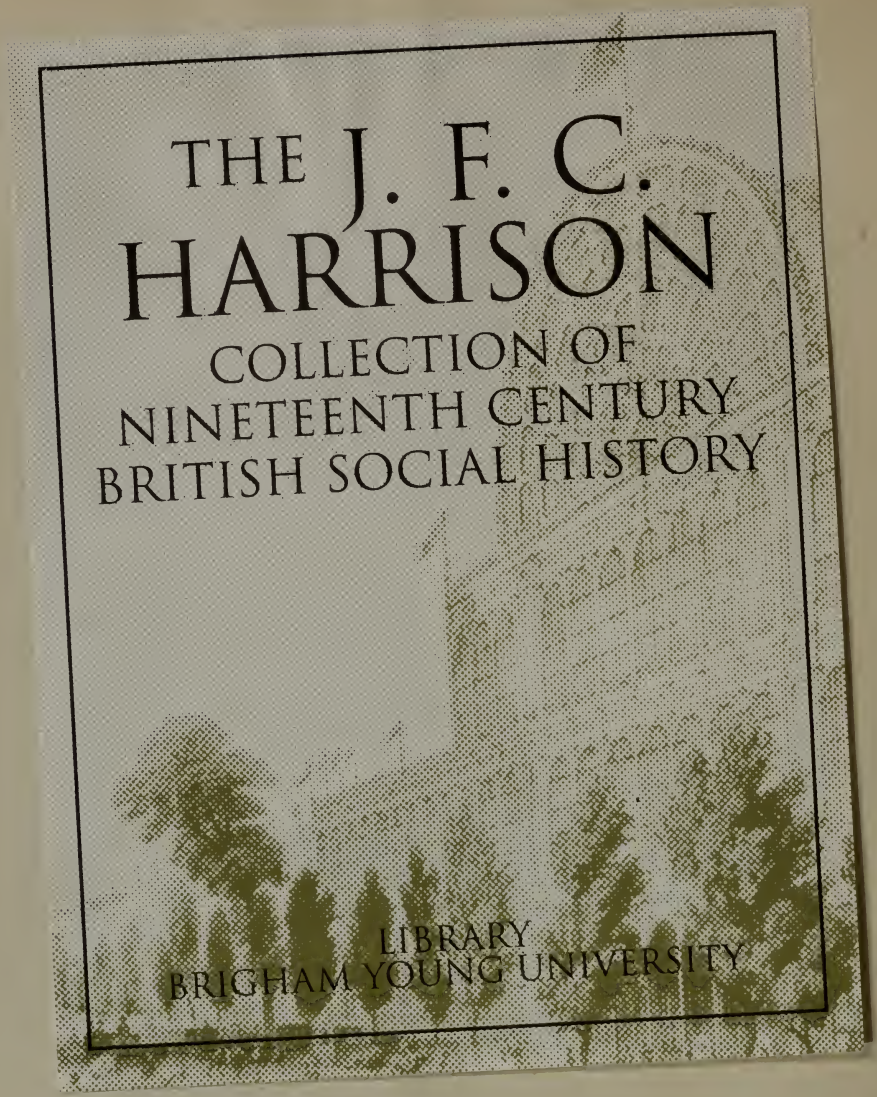
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SALVATION SYRUP;

OR,

Light on Darkest England.

—o—

TWENTY years ago the Hallelujah Band spread itself far and wide, but soon spent itself like a straw fire. Then arose the Salvation Army, doing the same kind of work, and indulging in the same vagaries. These were imitations of the antics of the cruder forms of Methodism. Even the all-night meetings of the Whitechapel Salvationists, ten years ago, were faint copies of earlier Methodist gatherings, especially of those in Cornwall, which were described by the Rev. Richard Polwhele.* "At. St. Agnes," said this writer, "the Society stays up the whole night, when girls of twelve and fourteen years of age run about the streets, calling out that they are possessed." At Probus "the preacher at a late hour of the night, after all but the higher classes left the room, would order the candles to be put out, and the saints fall down and kneel on their naked knees; when he would go round and thrust his hand under every knee to feel if it were bare." The Salvationists never went so far as this. Freaks of such description are left, in this age, to the followers of King Solomon in the Brighton Glory Hole. But a friend of ours, who visited an all-night Salvation meeting at Whitechapel in 1882, told us that the light was very dim, the voices were low, cheeks came perilously close in prayer, and at one moment the proceedings threatened to develope into a thorough-going love-feast.

As far as a more cultivated age would allow, the Salvation Army advertised and recruited itself by the

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* *Anecdotes of Methodism.*

familiar practices of what Professor Huxley calls "corybantic Christianity." During the last six or seven years it has grown more decorous, but prior to that time its vulgarity was excessive. Its songs, its rowdy meetings, its coarse, imbecile language, its ludicrous street processions, were enough to furnish a Swift with fresh material for his indictment of mankind. The names of its officers, as reported in its journal, were curiosities to the student of human aberration. There was the "Hallelujah Fishmonger," the "Blood-washed Miner," the "Devil Dodger," the "Devil Walloper," and "Gypsy Sal." Many of the worshippers of success who are now flocking around General Booth as a new Savior of Society, would be astonished if they were to turn over the old pages of the *War Cry*.

No one can pretend that "General" Booth is a man of spiritual genius. He is essentially a man of business. His faculty is for organisation, not for the promulgation of new ideas or the creation of new material. His eye for a good advertisement is unequalled. Barnum forgot Booth in calling himself the greatest showman on earth. As the present writer said in 1882, the head of the Salvation Army is "a dexterous manager; he knows how to work the oracle; he understands catering for the mob; in short he is a very clever showman, who deals in religion, just as other showmen deal in wild animals, giants, dwarfs, two-headed sheep, fat women, and Siamese twins."

Everything in the Salvation Army is subordinated to "business." At the head-quarters a minute register is kept of all the officers. Few of them are paid a regular salary. They are largely dependent on "results." Whatever their faculty may be for "saving souls," they must rake in enough shekels, or they are drafted from post to post, and finally discharged. On the same principle, Booth has married his family "well," as the world calls it, and put them into all the higher posts.

By this means he secures a select circle of trusted subordinates, who convey his orders to the lower circles of the Army, and see to their execution. While this plan lasts there will be no dangerous mutiny ; especially as, in addition, the whole of the Army's property is held in the name of William Booth. There is, in fact, a Booth dynasty ; though it may be doubted if the dynasty will long outlast its founder. Certainly his death will cause changes, and his empire will probably split up like Alexander's.

Eight years ago the General's eldest son was married to a young lady of "great expectations," who joined the Booths against her father's wishes. With a keen eye for business, the General resolved to turn the marriage into a public show. Of course, the legal ceremony had to be performed elsewhere, but the Salvation performance came off at the Army's biggest meeting-place. The price of admission was a shilling a head, and £300 was taken at the doors. A collection was also made inside. During the speech of "Commissioner" Railton, an able man who has had an eccentric career, the crowd began to press towards the door. "Stop," cried Booth, "don't go yet, there's going to be a collection." But the audience melted faster than ever. Then the General jumped up, stopped Railton unceremoniously, and shouted, "Hold on! we'll make the collection now."

During the farcical marriage ceremony the General was duly facetious. His remarks tickled the ears of the groundlings. There was also the usual spice of blasphemy. Before Bramwell Booth marched on to the platform a board was held up bearing the inscription, "Behold the bridegroom cometh."

Begging letters were sent out by Commissioner Railton, though cheques were to be "payable to William Booth, as usual." It was sought to raise a good sum,

not for Bramwell personally, but to reduce the Army's debt of £11,000. The printed slips were headed, "Wedding Presents to Mr. Bramwell Booth," who was stated to have worked so hard for the Army that his hair was grey at twenty-seven. But the piety was properly mixed with the business, and subscribers were told that their cash would not only gladden the hearts of the Booths, but "make the devil tremble," and "give earth and hell another shock."

This experiment was so successful that the General has repeated it on several occasions. But he carried indecency to the point of disgustfulness at the funeral of Mrs. Booth. The poor lady's corpse was dragged hither and thither by the inveterate old showman. It was brought up from Clacton-on-Sea and exhibited to the public at Clapton. Collection boxes were well in evidence, and although there was no charge to see the corpse, there were significant hints that a trifle was expected. Then the corpse was removed to Olympia, the scene of Barnum's triumphs. No effort was spared to secure a great success. Officers were ordered up from all parts of the kingdom. The rank and file of the Army were also invited, and tickets were available for any number of outsiders. With regard to the performance, we must remember that tastes differ. But one portion of it was calculated to shock every person with any delicacy of feeling. Booth and his kindred stood up to sing around the coffin the hymn they sang around Mrs. Booth's death-bed. The performers seemed to say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, you were not present when we sang your mother to glory, but just look and listen, and you will see how it was done."

For a third time the corpse was shifted to Queen Victoria-street. Unlimited advertising brought a tremendous crowd of sight-seers. Booth headed the procession, followed by the Booth dynasty, and all of them bowed and smiled to the cheering multitude.

Even in a funeral coach the Grand Old Showman had an eye to business.

Such being General Booth's attitude towards the public, what is his attitude towards the Salvation Army? Any one who reads his "Orders and Regulations" will see that he has his cattle well in hand, and not only can drive them where he pleases, but flick them smartly on any part with his long-reaching whip. He subjects them absolutely to his personal despotism. Every part of his soldiers' lives is regulated. They must court and marry within the ranks. "Should a soldier," he says, "become engaged to an officer who afterwards gives up or forfeits his or her commission, the soldier would be justified in breaking off the engagement." The General wishes to *breed* Salvationists. He tells them what to eat and what to wear. He informs them that they are only passengers through this world. "Though still living in the world," he says, "the Salvationist is not of it, and he has, in this respect no more business with its politics—that is, the public management of affairs—than he has with its pleasures." When the General wants his soldiers to vote or act politically, he will issue a manifesto, and every one is then expected to "act in harmony with the rules and regulations laid down for him by his superior officers." These superior officers, who take *their* orders from General Booth, must be perfectly obeyed, for "they have the Spirit of God, and will only command what is right."

Now it is well to remember all this in discussing General Booth's new scheme of social salvation. He insists on retaining absolute command of all the funds, and on working the whole scheme through the Salvation Army. All who assist him, therefore, are helping to promote the development of a vast body of religious fanatics, under the despotic control of a single man, who will not scruple, when it serves his purpose to,

use his voluntary slaves, for political as well as social objects. For General Booth has his own notions—crude as many of them are—and it is not in human nature to refrain from using power for the realisation of one's ideas. And Pope Booth is more absolute than Pope Pecci. The Vicar of Christ at Rome is unable to move without his Holy Council of Cardinals; but the Vicar of Christ in Queen Victoria-street, London, is the unchecked and irresponsible ruler of the whole Salvation Army.

. . . . . .

General Booth's success as an organiser is great, though he has had a comparatively easy task in organising *sheep*. Now, however, he proposes to deal with the *goats*. Some of his scanty leisure has been devoted to studying the social question, and as the interest in the Army's old methods is obviously declining, he proposes to raise a million of money, and reform that part of the population which John Bright called "the residuum." In other words, the wily old General has launched a new boom.

Plaudits are heard on nearly every side. The religious bodies give him the homage of fear. They shout approval because they dare not show hostility. Next come the mob of cheap philanthropists. This consists of rich ladies and gentleman, who feel twinges of remorse at living sumptuously while others are starving, and who are ready to pay conscience-money to any social charlatan. When they have written out a cheque they feel relieved. "On with the dance, let joy be unconfined." But it is not thus that the spectre of poverty and misery will be laid.

Evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart.

If the so-called lower classes are to be elevated, the so-called upper classes will find they will have to do

some *thinking*. Social knots cannot be cut, they must be untied. The Sphinx says you must *read* her riddle. All the money-bags in the world will never smooth her terrible brow.

General Booth's scheme of social salvation is before the world in the form of a book. Let us examine the prophecy of this would-be Moses of the serfs of poverty and degradation.

An ordinary author would sign himself "William Booth," but this one is "General" even on a title-page. *In Darkest England* is an obvious plagiarism on Stanley, and *The Way Out* is suggested by his long travel through the awful Central African forest.

In the preface General Booth acknowledges the "valuable literary help" of a "friend of the poor, who, though not in any way connected with the Salvation Army, has the deepest sympathy with its aims, and is to a large extent in harmony with its principles." The friend is Mr. Stead. This gentleman has "written up" the scheme in the manner of "the born journalist," that is, in the fashion of the "Modern Babylon" and the adventures of Eliza Armstrong. He contributes the descriptions, the gush, the hysterics, the sentences crowded with adjectives and adverbs. Sometimes he writes a whole chapter, unless our literary scent misleads us; sometimes he interpolates the General, and sometimes the General interpolates Stead. One result of this twofold authorship is that the book is twice as big as it should be; another result is that it often contradicts itself. For instance, the General states in the preface that he has known "thousands, nay, I can say tens of thousands," who have proved the value of *spiritual* means of reformation, having "with little or no temporal assistance, come out of the darkest depths of destitution, vice, and crime, to be happy and honest citizens and true sons and servants of God." Elsewhere (p. 243) he speaks of them as "multitudes." Yet in

the very next paragraph of the preface Mr. Stead (if we mistake not) breaks in with the assertion that "the rescued are appallingly few," a mere "ghastly minority."

This little contradiction may throw light on the rumor that Booth has been urged into this scheme of temporal salvation. Once upon a time he was down on "Commissioner" Smith, whose tendencies in this direction were obtrusive ; and how long is it since he wrote in the new Rules and Regulations, that the members of the Salvation Army had nothing to do with the world, its politics, its business, or its pleasures? The hand is the hand of Booth, but the voice seems the voice of Stead.

Here is another contradiction, and this time a vital one. The General curls his upper lip (p. 18) at those "anti-Christian economists who hold that it is an offence against the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to try to save the weakest from going to the wall, and who believe that when once a man is down the supreme duty of a self-regarding Society is to jump upon him." Without dwelling on the fact that this is a shocking and perfectly gratuitous libel, probably meant to pander to Christian prejudices, we content ourselves with drawing attention to a contradictory declaration (p. 44) that "In the struggle for life the weakest will go to the wall, and there are so many weak. The fittest, in tooth and claw, will survive. All that we can do is to soften the lot of the unfit and make their suffering less horrible than it is at present. No amount of assistance will give a jelly-fish a backbone. No outside propping will make some men stand erect." Thus the General, or Mr. Stead, joins hands with the "anti-Christian economists" in the doctrine that it is useless to try to save the weakest from going to the wall. Of course he does not endorse the policy of jumping on them, but that

policy is merely a production of his own pious imagination.

This contradiction we say is vital. The first statement is a sneer at Natural Selection, the second is a frank admission of its supremacy. They represent two antagonistic philosophies. They mark the parting of the ways between the Christian and the Evolutionist. They are as incompatible as oil and water, and no thoughtful man would attempt to reconcile them. But Booth (or isn't it Stead ?) combines incompatibles with the alkali of sentiment. And this failure to discern the distinctiveness of opposite first principles shows the book to be the work of sciolists, and vitiates its scheme of social reform from beginning to end. No work can succeed without a knowledge of materials. Every effort at improvement has in it the elements of success or failure as it recognises or ignores the special laws of human nature, and the more general laws of biology that lie behind them.

An amusing contradiction occurs in another place (p. 14), to which we call attention in order to show the chaotic character of the writing ; and this time, we judge from the style, it is Stead contradicting Stead. Speaking of the harlot, he says—

> "But there, even in the lowest depths, excommunicated by Humanity and outcast from God, she is far nearer the pitying heart of the One true Savior than all the men who forced her down, aye, and than all the Pharisees and Scribes who stand silently by while these fiendish wrongs are perpetrated before their very eyes."

The theology of this passage is worthy of the wild exaggeration with which it closes. The poor harlot is "outcast from God," but near the "pitying heart" of Christ ; in other words, God the Father is on the side of injustice and cruelty, and God the Son on the side of justice and mercy. One person of the Trinity is played off against another, and it is not for us to

settle the difference between them. We leave the matter to the second thoughts of Mr. Stead, or the divine illumination of General Booth.

Indeed, the entire theology of this book is worthy of Bedlam, and especially of the criminal lunatic department. A personal Devil is seriously trotted out (p. 159) for the laughter of intelligent men and women, and even of decently educated children. Prosperous people, we are told, see something strange and quaint in the language of the Bible, which "habitually refers to the Devil as an actual personality," but Hell and the Devil are certitudes to the Salvationists who work in the slums.

Well, if the Devil is so active, what is God doing? Apparently nothing. Booth is going to reform our drunkards, or try to if we give him the money, but he candidly admits (p. 181), perhaps in a moment of forgetfulness, that the confirmed toper will drink himself "into a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell," unless he is "delivered by an Almighty hand." It is God alone, then, who can save the most fallen. Their fate lies in his hands. And what does he do for them? The answer is to be found in General Booth's appeal. A million of money, and the co-operation of a multitude of men and women, are requested for the purpose of saving at least *some* of the poor wretches who are beyond the power of self-help, although "the Almighty hand" could easily pluck them out of their degradation. Nor does Booth expect that *all* will be saved by his scheme, however well supported and successful. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the God he worships will allow men and women to perish whom he might promptly save; yes, allow them to perish in this world, physically, intellectually, and morally, and afterwards torment them for ever and ever in Hell. And it is this God, this incredible monster of wickedness, in whom General Booth trusts, and whom he bids the

Freethinker look up to with admiration and love. Nay, he regards "trust in Jehovah" (p. 241) as the chief credential of the Salvation Army for carrying out an enterprise which is to cost a million sterling. Let the worshippers of Jehovah support him then. The Freethinker will necessarily regard this insane theology as a rottenness at the very heart of the experiment.

Without going through all the insane theology of this book, we may—nay, we must—give a crowning instance of it.

"I am quite satisfied that these multitudes will not be saved in their present circumstances. All the Clergymen, Home Missionaries, Tract Distributors, Sick Visitors, and everyone else who care about the Salvation of the poor, may make up their minds as to that. If these people are to believe in Jesus Christ, become the Servants of God, and escape the miseries of the wrath to come, they must be helped out of their present social miseries. They must be put into a position in which they can work and eat, and have a decent room to live and sleep in, and see something before them besides a long, weary, monotonous, grinding round of toil, and anxious care to keep themselves and those they love barely alive, with nothing at the further end but the Hospital, the Union, or the Madhouse. If Christian Workers and Philanthropists will join hands to effect this change, it will be accomplished, and the people will rise up and bless them, and be saved; if they will not, the people will curse them and perish."—(p. 257).

Did ever a human being excogitate such blasphemous nonsense? God is openly declared to be a passive spectator of the great struggle between good and evil. At the end of it he will save the succeeders and damn the failers; although, according to Booth's own admission, hosts of both classes are what they are through the pressure of circumstances. Compared with such a God the bloody Moloch was a respectable deity.

Four men are living within sight and sound of each other, and one of them goes to the bad. Thereupon it is the duty of Smith, Jones, and Brown to rescue Robinson. If they succeed, God will give him a seat

in Heaven ; if they fail, or neglect their duty, God will cast him into Hell. Thus Robinson's fate depends upon the sympathy, self-sacrifice, and wisdom of Smith, Jones, and Brown. Want of heart on their part, and even want of sense, are alike fatal to his chance of salvation. God lets them do their best; if they do nothing, he is just as serene ; and at the day of judgment he sends Robinson to bliss or damnation, accordingly as Smith, Jones, and Brown—separately or collectively—have succeeded or failed in keeping him out of the gutter.

What a view of God ! And what a ghastly, roundabout way of stating the truth that religion is powerless to save the fallen, that men and women can only be elevated by secular agencies !

This truth has always been proclaimed by Freethinkers. It is a commonplace of their teaching. Yet the Churches have ignored or denied it. Here is General Booth, however, announcing it clearly enough to all who will take the theological wadding out of their ears. True, the discovery is late, but better late than never.

It is upon this truth that Booth's scheme is founded. Sometimes, indeed, he forgets it, and talks as though the preaching of Christ and him crucified were enough to regenerate society. But this truth, that man is very largely the creature of circumstances, and that evil circumstances should be changed if there is to be any improvement, is the governing idea of his project.

No doubt the "General" seeks an escape from the logical consequences of this truth. He says, for instance, that (p. 286) "to me has been given the idea," as though God *had* intervened and selected him as the human agent. But this is all nonsense. In the first place, if God gave Booth the idea, he might as well have given him the cash. In the second place, the idea—or rather, the set of ideas—is by no means a

revelation. Every part of Booth's scheme has been advocated by other men, and several parts are already reduced to practice, though not on the gigantic scale he contemplates. His Farm Colony is admittedly borrowed from Mr. E. T. Craig, a veteran Freethinker who was the soul of the Ralahine experiment. With this gentleman Booth has had interviews ; indeed, the "General"—perhaps with Mr. Stead's assistance—has simply picked other men's brains, although he takes care to conceal his indebtedness.

Naturally, too, the astute leader of the Salvation Army recognises the necessity of a *pious* appeal to wealthy Christians. He therefore "asserts in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving souls" that he "seeks the salvation of the body" (p. 45). And he declares (p. 3) it must not be supposed that he is "less dependent upon the old plans" or that he "seeks anything short of the old conquest." At the same time (p. 279) he "does not think that any sectarian differences or religious feelings whatever ought to be imported into this question." Is it not better, he asks, that miserable crowds of men and women should have work, food, clothes, and a home, even with "some peculiar religious notions and practices," than that they should be "hungry, and naked, and homeless, and possess no religion at all" ? Put in this way, of course, the question admits of only one answer. But this way of putting it begs the wider question ; for it does not follow that Booth's is the only possible scheme of social reform, or even that it is calculated to succeed.

The real fact is, disguise it how it may, that Booth's scheme is only an extension of the Salvation Army. He promises that there shall be no compulsion, that the poor he gets hold of shall not be pressed into any form offaith, that religious freedom shall be repected. But what will the promise avail ? The whole scheme, from

top to bottom, is to be worked by the Salvationists; every penny is to pass through Booth's hands, and every order is to issue from his brain. Outsiders are only wanted in the shape of subscribers. Is it not idle, then, to suppose that the scheme will, in practice, be anything else than a huge recruiting system for the Salvation Army? We venture to say that if Booth's *first* thought were for the poor, he would invite the formation of an influential Committee, and not seek the monopoly of all the cash and credit for his own sect.

Let us now turn to the scheme itself. Let us see what evils are to be remedied, and the nature of the remedy proposed.

In the opening chapters, written almost exclusively by Mr. Stead, there is a vivid, but, of course, exaggerated, picture of the diseases of society. The writer has walked through the "shambles of our civilisation," until "it seemed as if God were no longer in this world, but that in his stead reigned a fiend, merciless as Hell, ruthless as the grave." Of course the grave is neither ruthless nor tender; and, of course, it is not Hell, but the God of Hell, that is merciless. But, apart from these criticisms, it is evident that Mr. Booth-Stead or Mr. Stead-Booth, is aware of much preventible evil; nor are we disposed to quarrel with him for calling it "a satire upon our Christianity," although we might suggest the impossibility of satirising a creed which has to make such shameful confessions after so many centuries of wealth, power, and privilege, and such a supreme opportunity of cleansing the world if it had the capacity for the task. This Christianity has failed —disastrously and ignominiously; yet has it played the dog in the manger, and refused to allow Science and Philosophy a trial; and even now, when condemned and self-condemned, it only whines for another chance, like an old offender for the hundredth time in the prisoners' dock.

Eighteen centuries after the advent of "the Redeemer," and in the most pious country in the world, it is Booth's calculation that one-tenth of the population, or about three millions of men, women, and children are sunk in destitution, vice, and crime. In London alone, the city of churches, where everything but religion is tabooed on Sunday, there are 100,000 prostitutes, 85,000 thieves, and drunkards galore, to say nothing of the paupers, the idle, and the temporarily unemployed. And the disease is getting worse, according to Booth, who declares that something must be done immediately. Well, we will neither dispute his statistics nor his forecast, but just take his plan of campaign and see whether it has the remotest chance of success.

What is General Booth's scheme for dealing with the "submerged tenth," or three millions of the poor, the unemployed, and the vicious? And in what spirit will he set to work if he gets the hundred thousand pounds down, with the prospect of the rest of a million pounds afterwards?

Booth is a bold man and his promises are magnificent. "If the scheme," he says, "which I set forth in these pages is not applicable to the Thief, the Harlot, the Drunkard, and the Sluggard, it may as well be dismissed without ceremony."

We suspect that the Sluggard will be the toughest subject of all. Booth has to solve the insoluble problem of how to put nervous energy into a body in which it is constitutionally lacking. Common sense says the thing cannot be done. You may galvanise the Sluggard for a while, but the effect will not last. Energy is not acquired, it is congenital. If Booth would take the trouble to read Mr. Havelock Ellis's book on Criminals, not to mention more recondite works, he would see that the Sluggard and the Thief are first cousins. Both have a defective vitality, only

the Thief, and the Criminal generally, is capable, like all predatory creatures, of spasmodic activity. The type is well known and should be dealt with scientifically. Inveterate criminals should be segregated. There is no necessity to treat them with cruelty. They should be surrounded with comfort, but they should be rigorously prevented from procreating their like. Science shows us that the only permanently successful way of dealing with these classes is to cut off the supply.

Certainly there are many persons in gaol who are not congenital criminals, and these should be dealt with in a spirit of wisdom and humanity. Were they treated like men, subjected to proper discipline, and rewarded for good behavior and industry, instead of being punished so liberally for bad behavior and idleness, most of them would be reclaimed. In ordinary prisons —so wretched, so inhuman, and so imbecile is the system—eighty per cent. of first offenders come back again ; while in the one great American prison which is conducted on a better method the percentage is exactly reversed, only twenty per cent. returning to gaol, and eighty per cent. joining the ranks of decent society.

General Booth is not a scientist. He knows nothing of the lessons of Evolution. He is not aware that thousands of men and women are born in every generation who are behind the age. They are types of a vanished order of mankind, relics of antecedent stages of culture. Natural Selection is always eliminating them, and General Booth proposes to coddle them, to surround them with artificial circumstances, and give them a better chance. He does not see that most of them, however propped up by the more energetic and independent, will always bear the stamp of unfitness ; nor does he see that he will enable them to beget and rear a more numerous offspring of the same character.

The law of heredity is a stern fact, and it will not budge a hair's-breadth for General Booth and all the sentimental religionists in the world.

Take the Harlots, for instance. We are far from denying that many girls, after being seduced by men, are pushed into a life of vice. Christian society has no mercy on female frailty ; it drives a girl who has listened to the voice of a tempter, or the first suggestions of her sexual passions, into a career of infamy ; and then, when it has helped to poison her life, it hypocritically sheds tears over her and sets up associations for her rescue. This is true enough—damnably true—but it is not the whole truth. Just as there are congenital criminals, there are congenital harlots. They are cases of survival or reversion. Discipline of every kind is hateful to them. They prefer to do what they like, how they like, and when they like. Animality and vanity are strong in them, but they have little steady energy and no self-control. In a polygamous state of society they would find a place in a harem ; but in a monogamous and industrial state of society they are hopelessly out of harmony with the general environment. Here is an instructive little table from General Booth's book. He takes a hundred cases "as they come" from his Rescue Register.

Causes of Fall :	
Drink	14
Seduction	33
Wilful Choice	24
Bad Company	27
Poverty	2
Total	100

Twenty-three of these girls had been in prison. Only two were pushed into vice by poverty. Seduction, wilful choice, and bad company, come to much the same thing in the end. In any case, one-fourth of the whole hundred deliberately took to prostitution. Now

if General Booth fancies that the money he spends on these is a good investment, while a greater number of good girls are trying to lead an honest life in difficult circumstances, with little or no assistance from "charity," we venture to say he is grievously mistaken; and we think he is basking in a Fool's Paradise, unless he is trading on pious credulity, when he looks forward (p. 133) to the girls of Piccadilly exchanging their quarters for "the strawberry beds of Essex or Kent."

Facts are facts. It is useless to blink them. The present writer did not make the world, or its inhabitants, and he disowns all responsibility for its miserable defects. But when you attempt to reform the world there is only one thing that will help you. Humanity is presupposed. Without it you would never make a beginning. But after that the one requisite is Science. Now all the science displayed in General Booth's book might be written large on thick paper, and tied to the wings of a single pigeon without impeding its flight.

General Booth himself, in one of his lucid intervals, recognises the hard facts we have just insisted on. "No change in circumstances," he says (p. 85), "no revolution in social conditions, can possibly transform the nature of man." "Among the denizens of Darkest England there are many who have found their way thither by defects of character which would, under the most favorable circumstances, relegate them to the same position." Again he says (p. 204):

"There are men so incorrigibly lazy that no inducement you could offer will tempt them to work; so eaten up by vice that virtue is abhorrent to them, and so inveterately dishonest that theft is to them a master passion. When a human being has reached that stage, there is only one course that can be rationally pursued. Sorrowfully, but remorselessly, it must be recognised that he has become lunatic, morally demented, incapable of self-government, and that upon him, therefore, must be passed the sentence of permanent seclusion from a world in which he is not fit to be at large."

These very people, who are the worst part of the social problem, Booth will not trouble himself very greatly about. Here are a few extracts from the Rules for the "Colonists," as he calls the people who come into his scheme.

(*a*) Expulsion for drunkenness, dishonesty, or falsehood will follow the third offence.

(*b*) After a certain period of probation, and a considerable amount of patience, all who will not work to be expelled.

(*c*) The third offence will incur expulsion, or being handed over to the authorities.

Expulsion is Booth's whip, and a very convenient one —for him! He will soon simplify his enterprise. All who come to him will be taken, but he will speedily return to society all the liars, drunkards, thieves, and idlers; so that when the scheme is in full swing, society will still have the old problem of dealing with the residuum, and in this respect Booth will not have helped in the least.

General Booth's scheme is thus, in the ultimate analysis, merely one for dealing with the unemployed. On this point his ideas are simply childish. He seems to imagine that *work* is a thing that can be found in unlimited quantities. He does not suspect the existence of economic laws. It never occurs to him that by artificially providing work for one unemployed person he may drive another person out of employment. Nor has he the least inkling of the law of population which lies behind everything.

In his Labor Shops, in London, he proposes to make match-boxes. Well, now, the community is already supplied with all the match-boxes it wants. The demand cannot be stimulated. And every girl that Booth takes in from the streets and sets to making match-boxes, which are to be put on the market, will turn some other girl out of employment at Bryant and May's or other match factories.

Similarly with the Salvation Bottles (p. 120) and the Social Soap (p. 136). Booth's soap, if it gets sold, will lessen the demand for other people's soap, and thus a lot of existing soap-makers will be thrown out of work. If he collects old bottles, and furbishes them up "equal to new," there will be so many less new bottles wanted, and a lot of existing glass-bottle makers will be thrown out of work. The wily old General of the Salvation Army, owing to a want of economic knowledge, falls into a most obvious fallacy. He is like the Irishman, who lengthened his shirt by cutting a piece off the top and sewing it on the bottom.

Getting hold of fish and meat tins, cleaning them up, and manufacturing them into toys, is hardly worth all the eloquence spent upon it by Booth's literary adviser. Nor is there much to be said in favor of an Inquiry Office for lost people. If it be true that 18,000 people are "lost" in London every year, it may be assumed that the majority of them do not want to be found, and it is the business of the police to look after the rest. Neither is there any necessity to subvention General Booth to obtain workman's dwellings out of town instead of ugly, dreary model dwellings in the midst of dirt and smoke. Nothing can be done until provision is made by the railway companies for conveying the workmen to and fro for twopence a day, and when this step is taken, as it must be, private enterprise will construct the dwellings without Salvation charity. With regard to the scheme of the Poor Man's Bank, it would have been but fair to say that the idea is borrowed from infidel Paris, where for many years a benevolent Society has lent money to honest and capable poor men with gratifying results.

The giving of legal advice gratis to the poor would be a good thing if it did not lead to unlimited litigation. Of course General Booth does not say, and perhaps he does not know, that Mr. Bradlaugh has been doing this

for twenty-five years. Thousands of poor men, not necessarily Freethinkers, have had the benefit of his legal advice. No one in quest of such assistance has ever knocked at his door in vain. Finally, with respect to "Whitechapel-at-Sea," a place which Booth projects for the reception of his poor people when they badly need a little sea-air and sunshine, it must be said that this kind of charity has been carried on for years, and that Booth is only borrowing a leaf from other people's book. In fact, the "General" collects all the various charitable ideas he can discover, dishes them up into one grandiose scheme, and modestly asks for a million pounds to carry out "the blessed lot."

Singly and collectively these projects will no more affect "the unemployed" than scratching will cure leprosy. Every effect has its cause, which must be discovered before any permanent good can be done. Now the causes of want of employment (if men desire to find it) are political and economical. The business of the true reformer is to ascertain them and to remove or counteract them. Pottering with their effects, in the name of "charity," is like dipping out and purifying certain barrels of water from an everflowing dirty stream.

At the very best "charity" is artificial, and social remedies must be natural. Work cannot be *provided.* People have certain incomes and allow themselves a certain expenditure. If they give Booth, or any other charlatan, a hundred pounds to find work for "the unemployed," they have a hundred pounds less to spend in other ways, and those who previously supplied them with that amount of commodoties or service will necessarily suffer. Shuffle one pack of cards how you will, the hands may differ, but the total number of cards will be fifty-two.

General Booth talks infinite nonsense about the "failure" of Trade Unions because they only include

a million and a half of workmen. Rome was not built in a day, and even the Salvation Army, with God Almighty to help it, is not yet as extensive as this "failure." Nor does the world need Booth to tell it the benefits of co-operation. He looks to it as "one of the chief elements of hope in the future." So do thousands of other people, but what has this to do with the Salvation Army?

The only part of Booth's scheme which is of the least value is the one he has borrowed from a Freethinker. The Farm Colony is suggested by the Rahaline experiment associated with the name of Mr. E. T. Craig. But not only was Mr. Craig a Freethinker, the same may be said of Mr. Vandeleur, the landlord who furnished the ground for the experiment. At any rate, he was a disciple and friend of Robert Owen, who declared that the great cause of the frustration of human welfare was "the fundamental errors of every religion that had hitherto been taught to man." "By the errors of these systems," said Owen, "he has been made a weak, imbecile animal; a furious bigot and fanatic; and should these qualities be carried, not only into the projected villages, but into Paradise itself, a Paradise would no longer be found."

The Rahaline experiment was a co-operative one, while Booth's is to be despotic. He proposes to put the unemployed at work on a big farm, and afterwards to draft them to an Over-sea Colony, where the reformed "thieves, harlots, drunkards, and sluggards" are to lay the foundations of a new province of the British Empire. Something, of course, might be done in this way, but it is doubtful if Booth will get hold of the right material to do it with, or if his Salvation methods will be successful. Much greater effects than "charity" could realise would be produced by a wise alteration of our Land Laws, which would lead to the application of fresh capital and labor to the cultivation

of the soil. It is, indeed, one of the prime evils of Booth's scheme, no less than of almost every other charitable effort, that it helps to divert attention from political causes of social disorders. No doubt charity is an excellent thing in certain circumstances, but the first thing to agitate for is justice ; and when our laws are just, and no longer create evils, it will be time enough for a huge system of charity to mitigate the still inevitable misery.

So far we have discovered nothing original in General Booth's scheme. Its elements may be reduced to three. There is (*a*) the reformation of weak, vicious, and criminal characters, which is a rather hopeless task especially when the attempt is made with *adults*. Something might be done with *children*, and in this respect Dr. Barnardo's work, with all its defects, is infinitely more sensible than General Booth's. Then there is (*b*) providing labor for the unemployed, which, whether attempted by governments or charitable bodies is an economical fallacy. Finally there is (*c*) the planting of town populations on the land, which has a certain small promise of success if the scheme were to take the form of allotments to capable cultivators ; but which, on the other hand, will surely come to grief if the experiment is made with even the selected residuum of great cities.

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But supposing the scheme of General Booth were in itself full of social promise, a reasonable person would still ask, What are the qualifications of a religious body like the Salvation Army for carrying out such a scheme ?

First of all, let us take the General. He plainly tells us he is to be the head of everything. He is not only to be the leader, but the brain ; in fact, he expounds this function of his in a long passage of dubious physiology. Now, the General is undoubtedly a clever man.

But is he such a universal genius as to "boss" everything, from playing tambourines to making tin toys, from preaching "blood and fire" to the administration of a big farm, from walking backwards for Jesus to superintending a gigantic emigration agency? Unless he combines a vast diversity of faculties with supernatural energy, he is sure to come to grief; for absolute obedience to him is indispensable, and if *he* fails, the whole experiment fails with him.

Even if General Booth prove himself equal to the occasion, the despotic nature of the management makes the success of the scheme precarious. Everything hangs upon the single thread of his life, which may be snapped at any moment. Even if we admit his consummate and comprehensive genius, what guarantee is there that his successor will inherit it?

General Booth bids us remember that the Salvation Army *has* succeeded, and its past achievements are a pledge of its future triumphs. But let us look into this, and see how much it is to the point.

That the Salvation Army is a striking success is not to be disputed. But what is the *character* of its success? This is an all-important question: for a man, or an organisation, may be very successful in one direction, and hopelessly impotent in another.

Undoubtedly the Salvation Army caters for hysterical persons who are sick and tired of the "respectable" forms of religion. But is it true that the Army reforms the thief, the drunkard, and the profligate? Now in answering this question it is well to bear in mind that solitary cases prove absolutely nothing. There is no principle, no system, no organisation, which has not absorbed some persons who previously led lives of selfish indulgence, aroused in them an interest in impersonal objects, and surrounded them with a restraining public opinion. The real question is this —How is the Salvation Army in the main recruited?

Again and again it has been asserted by outsiders, and admitted by candid members, that the Army is principally recruited from other sects. Some years ago this assertion was publicly made in the *Times* by the Rev. Llewellyn Davies, who was prepared to prove it in his own parish of Marylebone. Mr. Davies was answered by "Commissioner" Railton, who indulged in vague generalities, which were cut short by the simple request to produce the notorious sinners converted in that parish. Of course they were not produced: for the most part these "converts" exist on paper.

The Army's pretensions are disproved by statistics. It boasts of nearly ten thousand officers and a million of adherents. Now if these, or a considerable proportion of them, had been drawn from the moral residuum of England, a very serious impression would have been made on the ranks of vice and crime. But what are the facts? While the Education Act has made a difference in the number of young criminals, there is no perceptible diminution in the number of hardened offenders. Prostitutes, also, are as numerous as ever, and the national drink-bill actually increases.

Revival movements have always boasted of moral successes, but history shows that they make no real impression on the community. The method is unscientific and doomed to failure. A salvation meeting, with its noise and excitement, has as much effect on public morality as a savage's tom-tom has upon the heavens. The noisy things in nature are generally futile. Whirlwinds and earthquakes affect the imagination, but it is the regular action of air and water that produces the greatest changes, and the gentle action of rain and sunshine that ripens the harvest. These "spiritual," and nearly always hysterical, agencies for human improvement, are based upon a denial of the physical basis of life, and of the doctrine of moral causation. They attract great attention, and

their leaders gain tremendous applause. But all the while the real work of progress is being done by other agencies—by the spread of knowledge, the growth of education, the discoveries of science, the silent triumphs of art, and the gradual expansion of the human mind Agitation is not necessarily progress. What is wanted is a new ingredient, and that is furnished by the more obscure, and often lonely men, whose greatness is only known to a few, although their thoughts are the seed of future harvests of wisdom and happiness for the human race.

Suppose, however, we concede, for the sake of argument, all the claims of the Salvation Army as a religious agency of reform. This would afford a presumption of its continued success *on the old lines*. But the *new lines* are a fresh departure. General Booth himself admits that "the new sphere on which we are entering will call for faculties other than those which have hitherto been cultivated." What guarantee has he then, beyond an unbounded and possibly exaggerated belief in himself, that those "faculties" will come when he "calls for" them? Will men of the required stamp of character and ability enrol themselves under the despotism of General Booth? And if they did, how long would he be able to hold them together? First of all, at any rate he has to get them. The ordinary Salvation Army captain is not equal to these things. This is obvious to General Booth; hence his fervid appeal to persons of greater capacity to throw themselves into his enterprise. But we do not believe he will obtain their assistance. It is far easier to extract a hundred thousand pounds, or even a million, from a gullible public, than to induce men and women of the stamp required in the successful conduct of a big social experiment to place themselves at the absolute command of a religious revivalist.

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Let us now turn to a tremendously important aspect of General Booth's scheme, which up to the present has been only alluded to. Lady Florence Dixie has pointed out, with her accustomed courage, that the scheme would, if successful, increase the pressure of population in the worst way by multiplying the unfit. Booth does not believe in celibacy, and we agree with him. But we are far from approving his idea of setting up a Matrimonial Bureau and bringing marriageable persons together. The marriages he is likely to promote will, of course, be chiefly among the classes he will try to reclaim. Such a prospect is anything but pleasant to those who understand the population question, and is quite appalling to those who understand the philosophy of Evolution.

When Archdeacon Farrar was preaching at Westminster Abbey on behalf of General Booth's scheme, he made this observation :—"The country is being more and more depleted, the great cities are becoming more and more densely overcrowded, and in great cities there is always a tendency to the deterioration of manhood—morally, physically, and spiritually. Our population is increasing at the rate of a thousand a day, and the most rapid increase is among the destitute and unfit." Precisely so ; and it is among these very classes that General Booth, if he honestly means what he says, will do his best to promote an increase of population. In this respect his scheme involves a grave social danger. On the whole, it seems pretty plain, as Professor Huxley observes, that if General Booth does sixpennyworth of good, he will do a good shillingsworth of harm.

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To conclude. Except for the Farm Colony, which we do not see how Booth is to manage successfully, we are able to perceive nothing in his scheme which really touches the heart of the social problem; while as a

remedy for the "unemployed" it seems to us perfectly ridiculous. The whole project, at bottom, is a new gigantic device for furthering the interests of the Salvation Army. If the other Christian bodies do not see this they must be lamentably deficient in insight. It is all very well to say that no pressure will be put upon the men and women in the Refuges and the Colonies, for they will be subjected to the omnipresent influence of the Salvation Army, which is to carry out the scheme to its minutest details.

Unless we are greatly mistaken, this truth is very apparent to General Booth. He insists on having absolute control of the funds and the arrangements, and although he may have no mercenary motives, he is doubtless seeking to gratify his ambition and love of power as well as to promote the "salvation of souls."

On the whole, however, we shall be glad to see the "General" get the money he is soliciting. The cash he collects will probably be diverted from other religious enterprises, and in this respect a Freethinker need not be in the least afflicted. His experiment will, in our opinion, do a real service to society. It will demonstrate before the very eyes of people who know next to nothing of history or economics the absolute futility of religious efforts to reform the world. When it is discovered that the poor rates, the statistics of drink, the number of the unemployed, the condition of the very poor, and the miseries and degradations of what is compendiously called the social evil, are not perceptibly affected by General Booth's efforts, the very dullest will see the deception of such enterprises, and turn their attention to the scientific aspects of the great social problem. This will be a great gain, and will amply compensate for the waste of a hundred thousand or even a million pounds.

POSTSCRIPTS TO SECOND EDITION.

(1) General Booth signalised the inauguration of his Social Scheme by quarreling with Mr. Frank Smith, who had acted as the chief officer of the Social Wing of the Salvation Army. Mr. Smith felt obliged to resign. From the correspondence which appeared in the newspapers, it seems that the principal ground of his complaint was General Booth's refusal to keep a separate account of income and expenditure for the Social Scheme. The accounts were to form a part of the general book-keeping of the Army. This was in defiance of the spirit, if not the letter, of Booth's promises, and Mr. Smith would not connive at what he considered a deception. After his resignation, however, the General declared there had been a misunderstanding, and the accounts would be kept separate. Whether they have been so kept, is a question which outsiders have no means of determining.

(2) General Booth has raised his £100,000. He has found, however, that his success in this direction has diverted about £10,000 from the ordinary income of the Salvation Army. He does not state—probably he does not know, and perhaps he does not care—how much he has diverted from the ordinary income of other bodies. Many loud complaints have been raised, which, taken in conjunction with Booth's own confession, seem to vindicate our contention that there is a certain amount of money available for philanthropical purposes, and that what is gained by one solicitant leaves so much less for division among the rest. Here, as elsewhere, there is a struggle for existence, and the fittest, in the circumstances, survive.

(3) Many persons have desired to know how the profits of General Booth's book have been alloted. It has had a very large sale, and there must have been a considerable sum to be disposed of. Probably a generous remuneration has been received by Mr. Stead, who generally succeeds in reconciling profit with enthusiasm.

(4) General Booth declares that he has never derived a penny of profit from the operations of the Salvation

Army. This may be literally true, but virtually it must imply a reservation. Booth began as a very poor man. He is now in a more flourishing position. It was reported in the newspapers, a year or two ago, that he had paid £4,000 for a new residence. Mr. Bramwell Booth recently lost a considerable sum of money by the failure of a stock-broker. The other members of the Booth family seem to be well provided for. The present writer has seen them travelling first class when he has been riding third, and they looked fully conscious of their importance as they walked along the platform.

(5) Up to the present the Social Scheme has made no appreciable impression on the poverty and misery of London. General Booth has set up a match-factory, and is now selling Salvation matches. They are said to be worth their price, but it must be remembered that the General gets all his capital for nothing. It will also be obvious that every box of matches he sells will diminish by so much the demand for matches supplied by other firms. He therefore gives employment to one man by taking it away from another.

(6) The foreign and the colonial tours of General Booth are a curious illustration of English modesty. It is difficult to understand why the inhabitants of Berlin and Paris should be expected to contribute towards the cost of reclaiming the poor and depraved in London. Every country has its own troubles, and should meet them in its own way. It is worthy of notice, however, that General Booth recognises far less misery in "infidel" Paris than in orthodox London.

(7) The recent "riots" at Eastbourne, where the Salvation Army insists on playing bands through the streets on Sunday, in defiance of the local bye-laws, suggest a curious reflection. General Booth takes *his* leisure and recreation at Clacton-on-Sea, and I am given to understand that he does not encourage the noises of his Army in that seaside retreat. If this be true, it must be allowed that he acts like a sensible man; but why does he keep the Army out of Clacton-on-Sea and inflict it upon Eastbourne, where other persons go to restore their jaded constitutions?

Bible Romances, by G. W. Foote

Bible Romances, First Series

G. W. Foote

BIBLE ROMANCES

First Series

By G. W. Foote

THE CREATION STORY.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—1.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Book of Genesis is generally thought, as Professor Huxley says, to contain the beginning and the end of sound science. The mythology of the Jews is held to be a divine revelation of the early history of man, and of the cosmic changes preparatory to his creation. The masses of the people in every Christian country are taught in their childhood that God created the universe, including this earth with all its flora and fauna, in five days; that he created man, "the bright consummate flower" of his work, on the sixth day, and rested on the seventh. Yet every student knows this conception to be utterly false; every man of science rejects it as absurd; and even the clergy themselves mostly disbelieve it Why, then, do they not disabuse the popular mind, and preach what they deem true instead of what they know to be false? The answer is very simple. Because they feel that the doctrine of the Fall is bound up with the Genesaic account of Creation, and that if the latter be discredited the former will not long be retained. The doctrine of the Fall being the foundation of the scheme of Atonement, the clergy will never admit the Creation Story to be mythical until they are forced to do so by external pressure. At any rate they cannot be expected to proclaim its falsity, since by so doing they would destroy the main prop of their power. What the recognised teachers of religion will not do, however, should not be left undone, especially when it is so needful and important. Men of science, by teaching positive and indisputable truths, are gradually but surely revolutionising the world of thought, and dethroning the priesthoods of mystery and superstition. Yet their influence on the masses is indirect, and they do not often trouble themselves to show the contradiction between their discoveries and what is preached from the pulpit. Perhaps they are right. But it is also right that others should appeal to the people in the name not only of science, but also of scholarship and common sense, and show them the incredible absurdity of much that the clergy are handsomely paid to preach as the veritable and infallible Word of God.

The Creation Story, with which the Book of Genesis opens, is incoherent, discrepant, and intrinsically absurd, as we shall attempt to show. It is also discordant with the plainest truths of Science. Let us examine it, after casting aside all prejudice and predilection.

If the universe, including this earth and its principal inhabitant, man, was created in six days, it follows that less than six thousand years ago chaos reigned throughout nature. This, however, is clearly untrue. Our earth has revolved round its central sun for numberless millions of years. Geology proves also that million years have elapsed since organic existence first appeared on the earth's surface, and this world became the theatre of life and death. Darwin speaks of the known history of the world as "of a length quite incomprehensible by us," yet even that he affirms "will hereafter be recognised as a mere fragment of time" com-pared with the vast periods which Biology will demand. The instructed members of the Church have long recognised these-statements as substantially true, and they have tried to reconcile them with Scripture by assuming that the word which in the History of Creation is rendereddayreally means aperiod, that is an elastic space of time which may be expanded or contracted to suit all requirements. But there are two fatal objections to this assumption. In the first place, the same word is rendereddayin the fourth commandment, and if it means period in Genesis it means period in Exodus. In that case we are commanded to work six periods and rest on the seventh, and each period must cover a geological epoch. How pleasant for those who happen to be born in the seventh period, how unpleasant for those born in one of the six! The lives of the one class all work, those of the other all play! In the second place, the account of each day's creation concludes with the refrain "and the evening and the morning were the first (or other) day." Now evening and morning are terms which mark the luminous gradations between night and day, and these phenomena, like night and day, depend on the earth's revolving on its axis and presenting different portions of its surface to the sun. Evening and morning clearly imply a space of twenty-four hours, and the writer of Genesis, whoever he was, would probably be surprised at any other interpretation of his words. It is sometimes argued, as for instance by Dr. M'Caul, that these primeval days were of vast and unknown duration, the evening and the morning not being dependent on their present causes. But this supposition could only apply to the first three days, for the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day, expressly "to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness." The fifth and sixth days, at least, must be understood as of normal length, and thus the chronological difficulties remain. All animal life was brought into existence on the last two days, and therefore the Bible still allows an antiquity of less than six thousand years for the world's fauna. Geology and Biology allow millions of years. Here then Science and the Bible are in flagrant and irreconcilable contradiction.

The fact that the writer of Genesis represents light as existing three days before the creation of the sun, the source of light, has frequently been noticed. One learned commentator supposed that God had infused a certain "luminosity" through the air, which was not exactly the same as the light of the sun. But light is not athing; it is a phenomenon caused by definite laws of astronomy and optics. Such explanations are but fanciful refuges of superstition. "God said let there be light and there was light," is not the language of science and history, but the language of

poetry. As such it is sublime. We find a similar expression in the Vedas of the Hindoos: "He thought, I will create worlds, and they were there!" Both become ridiculous when presented to us as a scientific statement The physical astronomer knows how worlds are formed, as well as how their movements are determined; he knows also the causes of light; and he knows that none of these processes resembles the accounts given in the Creation Stories of the Hebrews and the Hindoos.

Science knows nothing of six creative epochs, any more than of six creative days; and it is quite certain that the order of Creation given in Genesis differs widely from the revelations of Geology. For instance (and one instance in such a case is as good as a thousand), fish and fowl are said to have been created on the same day. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that day means period. The conclusion still is that fish and fowl were created together. Starting from this conclusion, what should we expect to find in our geological researches? Why, the fossil remains of fish and of fowl in the same epochs. But we find nothing of the kind. Marine animals antedate the carboniferous period, during which all our coal deposits were laid, but no remains of fowl are found until a later period. Now the carboniferious period alone, according to Sir William Thompson, covers many millions of years; so that instead of fish and fowl being contemporaneous, we find them geologically separated by inconceivable spaces of time. Here again the Bible and Science fatally disagree.

Even if we admit that the fifth day of creation was aperiod, the chronology of the Bible is still fatally at variance with fact With respect to the antiquity of the human race, it is precise and unmistakable. It gives us the age of Adam at his death, and the ages of the other antediluvian patriarchs. From the Flood the genealogies are carefully recorded, until we enter the historic period, after which there is not much room for dispute. From the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ, the Bible allows about four thousand years. The antiquity of the human race, therefore, according to Scripture, is less than six thousand years. Science, however, proves that this is but a fragment of the vast period during which man has inhabited the earth. There was a civilisation in Egypt thousands of years before the alleged creation of Adam. The Cushite civilisation was even more ancient Archaeology shows us traces of man's presence, in a ruder state, long before that. The researches of Mr. Pengelly in Kent's Cavern prove that cave-men lived there more than two-hundred thousand years ago; while geological investigations in the Valley of the Somme have established the fact that primitive men existed there in the tertiary period. Professor Draper writes:—"So far as investigations have gone, they indisputably-refer the existence of man to a date remote from us by many hundreds of thousands of years. It must be borne in mind that these investigations are quite recent, and confined to a very limited geographical space. No researches have yet been made in those regions which might reasonably be regarded as the primitive habitat of man. We are thus carried back immeasurably beyond the six thousand years

of Patristic chronology. It is difficult to assign a shorter date for the last glaciation of Europe than a quarter of a million of years, andhuman existence antedates that. The chronology of the Bible is thus altogether obsolete."

The idea of a seven-days' creation was not confined to the Jews: it was shared by the Persians and Etruscans. The division of the year into months and weeks is a general, although not a universal practice. The ancient Egyptians observed a ten-days' week, but the seven-days' week was well known to them. The naming of the days of the week after the seven Planets was noted by Dion Cassius as originally an Egyptian custom, which spread from Egypt into the Roman Empire. The Brahmins of India also distinguish the days of the week by the planetary names. This division of time was purely astronomical. The Jews kept the Feast of the New Moon, and other of their ceremonies were determined by lunar and solar phenomena. We may be sure that the myth of a seven-days' creation followed and did not precede the regular observance of that period.

There is one feature of the Hebrew story of creation which shows how anthropomorphic they were. The Persians represent Ormuzd as keeping high festival with his angels on the seventh day, after creating all things in six. But the Hebrews represent Jehovah asrestingon the seventh day, as though the arduous labors of creation had completely exhausted his energies. FancyOmnipotencerequiring rest to recruit its strength! The Bible, and especially in its earlier parts, is grossly anthropomorphic. It exhibits God as conversing with men, sharing their repasts, and helping them to slaughter their foes. It represents him as visible to human eyes, and in one instance as giving Moses a back view of his person. Yet these childish fancies are still thrust upon as divine truths, which if we disbelieve we shall be eternally damned!

Let us now examine the Creation Story internally. In the first place we find two distinct records, the one occupying the whole of the first chapter of Genesis and the first three verses of the second, at which point the other commences. These two records belong to different periods of Jewish history. The older one is the Elohistic, so called because the creator is designated by the plural termElohim, which in our version is translatedGod. The more modern one is the Jehovistic, in which Elohim is combined with the singular termJehovah, translated in our-versionthe Lord God. The Elohistic and Jehovistic accounts both relate the creation of man, but instead of agreeing they widely differ. The former makes God create man in his own image; the latter does not even allude to this important circumstance. The former represents man as created male and female at the outset; the latter represents the male as created first, and the female for a special reason afterwards. In the former God enjoins the primal pair to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth;" in the latter there is no such injunction, but on the contrary, the bringing forth of children in sorrow is imposed upon the woman as a punishment for her sin, and she

does not appear to have borne any offspring until after the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Lastly, the Elohistic record makes no mention of this Paradise, in which, according to the Jehovistic record, the drama of the Fall was enacted, but represents man as immediately commissioned to subdue and populate the world. Such discrepancies are enough to stagger the blindest credulity.

We now proceed to examine the Jehovistic account of Creation in detail. We read that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, the Hebrew word for which isadamah. The word Adam means "be red," andadamahmay be referred to the red soil of Palestine. Kalisch also observes that man may have been originally called Adam on account of the red color of his skin. The Chinese represent man as kneaded ofyellowearth, and theredIndians ofredclay. The belief that man was formed of earth was not confined to the Jews, but has been almost universal, and undoubtedly arose from the fact that our bodies after death return to the earth and resolve into the elements. The Lord God placed this forlorn first man in the Garden of Eden with the command to till it, and permission to eat of the fruit of all its trees except "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." How Adam trespassed and fell, and brought a curse upon himself and all his innocent posterity, we shall consider in another pamphlet. The story of the Fall is infinitely curious and diverting, and must be treated separately.

Adam's first exploit, after he had taken a good look round him, was very marvellous. All the cattle and beasts of the field and fowl of the air were brought before him to be named, and "whatsover Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." This first Zoological Dictionary is unfortunately lost, or we should be able to call every animal by its right name, which would doubtless gratify them as well as ourselves. The fishes and insects were not included in this primitive nomenclature, so the loss of the Dictionary does not concern them.

The Lord made the animals pass before Adam seemingly with the expectation that he would choose a partner from amongst them. Nothing, however, struck his fancy. If he had fallen in love with a female gorilla or ourang-outang, what a difference it would have made in the world's history!

After this wonderful exploit "the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam," who surely must have been tired enough to fall into a good sound natural sleep, without a heavenly narcotic. While in this state one of his ribs was extracted for a purpose we shall presently refer to, and which he discovered when he awoke. This curious surgical operation involves a dilemma. If Adam was upright after it, he must have been lopsided before; if he was upright before it, he must have been lopsided after. In either case the poor man was very scurvily treated.

It has been maintained that God provided Adam with another rib in place of the one extracted. But this is a mere conjecture. Besides, if the Lord had a spare rib in stock he might have made a woman of it, without cutting poor Adam open and making apre mortemexamination of his inside.

The divine operator's purpose was a good one, whatever we may think of his means. He had discovered, what Omniscience would have foreknown, that it was not good for man to be alone, and had resolved to make him a help-meet. Adam's "spare rib" was the raw material of which his wife was manufactured. The Greenlanders believed that the first woman was fashioned out of the man'sthumb. The woman was brought to Adam, who said—"This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Not a word did he say about "soul of my soul." Perhaps he suspected she had none, and with some truth, if we go no further than our English version. When the Lord God made man, he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul," but apparently no such operation was performed on Eve. Indeed, it is very difficult to prove from the Bible that woman has a soul at all. Women should reflect on this. They should also reflect on the invidious fact that they were not included in the original scheme of things, but thrown in as a make-weight afterwards. Let them ponder this a while, and the churches and chapels in which this story is taught would soon be emptied. The majority of those who occupy seats in such places wear bonnets, and most of those who don't, go there for the sake of those who do.

When Adam had thus accosted his bride he grew prophetical. "Therefore," said he, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In his desire to give the institution of marriage the highest sanction, the writer of this story perpetrated a gross anachronism. Adam had no parents, nor any experience of marriage. Unless, therefore, we credit him with superhuman prescience, it is absurd to make him talk in this way.

Eve's name, no less than Adam's, betrays the mythological character of the story. It means the "mother of all," and was evidently applied to her by the Jewish writers in order to signify her supposed relationship to the human race.

While God was engaged in the work of creation, why did he not make two human couples, instead of one? The arrangement he adopted involved the propagation of the human species through incest Adam and Eve's sons must have had children by their sisters. If two couples had been created, their families might have intermarried, and mankind would not then have sprang from the incestuous intercourse of the very first generation. Surely omnipotence might have obviated the necessity of a crime against which civilised consciences revolt with unspeakable disgust.

Adam and Eve were placed by God in the Garden of Eden. "Eden," says Kalisch, "comprised that tract of land where the Euphrates and Tigris separate; from that spot the 'garden in Eden' cannot be distant. Let it suffice that we know its general position." Its exact position can never be ascertained. What a pity it is that Noah did not occupy some of his leisure time, during the centuries he lived after his exit from the ark, in writing a typography of the antediluvian world! The Greeks placed Paradise in the Islands of the Blessed, beyond the Pillars of Hercules in the western main. The Swede, Rudbeck, asserts that Paradise was in Scandinavia; some Russian writers supposed it to have been in Siberia; and the German writers, Hasse and Schulz, on the coast of Prussia. Eastern traditions place it in Ceylon, and regard the mountain of Rahoun as the spot where Adam was buried. Some old Christian writers hazarded the theory that Paradise was beyond the earth altogether, on the other side of the ocean which they conceived to encircle it, and that Noah was conveyed to our planet by the deluge. Kalisch gives a long list of ancient and modern authorities on the subject, who differ widely from each other as to the actual position of Eden, their only point of agreement being that it wassomewhere.

The Creation Story of the Bible cannot be considered as anything but a Hebrew myth. Scholars have abundantly shown the absurdity of supposing that Moses wrote it. Doubtless, as a piece of traditional mythology, it is very ancient, but it cannot be traced back in its present literary form beyond the Babylonish captivity. Men of science without exception disbelieve it, not only with regard to the world in general, but also with regard to the human race. In his famous article on "The Method and Results of Ethnology," Professor Huxley made this declaration:—"There are those who represent the most numerous, respectable, and would-be orthodox of the public, and who may be called 'Adamites,' pure and simple. They believe that Adam was made out of earth somewhere in Asia, about six thousand years ago; that Eve was modelled from one of his ribs; and that the progeny of these two having been reduced to the eight persons who landed on the summit of Mount Ararat after an universal deluge, all the nations of the earth have proceeded from these last, have migrated to their present localities, and have become converted into negroes, Australians, Mongolians, etc., within that time. Five-sixths of the public are taught this Adamitic Monogenism as if it were an established truth, and believe it. I do not; and I am not acquainted with any man of science, or duly instructed person, who does." The clergy, then, who go on teaching this old Creation Story as true, are either unduly instructed or dishonest, ignorant or fraudulent, blind guides or base deceivers. It is not for us to determine to which class any priest or preacher belongs: let the conscience of each, as assuredly it will, decide that for himself. But ignorant or dishonest, we affirm, is every one of them who still teaches the Creation Story as a record of actual facts, or as anything but a Hebrew myth.

The origin of the human race is far different from that recorded in Genesis. Man has undoubtedly been developed from a lower form of life. The rude remains of primitive men show that they

were vastly inferior to the present civilised inhabitants of the world, and even inferior to the lowest savages with whom we are now acquainted. Their physical and mental condition was not far removed from that of the higher apes; and the general opinion of biologists is that they were descended from the Old World branch of the great Simian family. There is, indeed, noabsoluteproof of this, nor is it probable that there ever will be, as the fossil links between primitive man and his Simian progenitor, if they exist at all, are most likely buried in that sunken continent over which roll the waters of the South Pacific Ocean. But as the line of natural development can be carried back so far without break, there is no reason why it should not be carried farther. The evolution theory is now almost universally accepted by men of science, and few of them suppose that man can be exempted from the general laws of biology. At any rate, the Bible account of Creation is thoroughly exploded, and when that is gone there is nothing to hinder our complete acceptance of the only theory of man's origin which is consistent with the facts of his history, and explains the peculiarities of his physical structure.

NOAH'S FLOOD.

BIBLE ROMANCES—2.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Bible story of the Deluge is at once the biggest and the most ridiculous in the whole volume. Any person who reads it with the eyes of common sense, and some slight knowledge of science, must admit that it is altogether incredible and absurd, and that the book which contains it cannot be the Word of God.

About 1,656 years after God created Adam, and placed him in the garden of Eden, the world had become populous and extremely wicked; indeed, every thought and imagination of man's heart was evil continually. What was the cause of all this wickedness we are not informed; but we are told that the sons of God took unto them wives of the daughters of men because they were fair, and we are led to suppose that these matches produced giants and other incurably wicked offspring. No physiological reason is assigned for this Strange result, nor perhaps was there any present to the mind of the writer, who probably had witnessed unhappy marriages in his own family, and was anxious to warn his readers, however vaguely, against allowing their daughters to be inveigled into matrimonial bonds with pious sniffling fellows, who professed themselves peculiarly the children of their Father in heaven. However, the narrative is clear as to the fact itself: men had all gone irrecoverably astray, and God had repented that he ever made them. In such a case an earthly human father would naturally have attempted to improve his family; but the Almighty Father either was too indifferent to do so, or was too well aware of the impossibility

of reforming his own wretched offspring; and therefore he determined to drown them all at one fell swoop, just as cat-loving old ladies dispose of a too numerous and embarrassing feline progeny. Bethinking him, however, God resolved to save alive one family to perpetuate the race: he was willing to give his creatures another chance, and then, if they persisted in going the wrong way, it would still be easy to drown the lot of them again, and that without any reservation. He had also resolved at first to destroy every living thing from off the face of the earth; but he afterwards decided to spare from destruction two of every species of unclean beasts, male and female, and fourteen, male and female, of all clean beasts and of all fowls of the air and of every creeping thing. Noah, his wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives (eight persons in all), were the only human beings to be preserved from the terrible fate of drowning.

Noah was commanded by God to build an ark for the reception-of the precious living freight, the dimensions of which were to be, in English measure, 550feet long, 93feet wide,and 55 feet deep. Into this floating box they all got; the flood then came and covered the earth, and all besides were drowned.

Now this is a very strange, a very startling story; it seems more like a chapter from the "Arabian Nights" or the "Adventures of Baron Munchausen" than from the sacred Scriptures of any Religion. Carnal reason prompts us to ask many questions about it.

1. How did Noah contrive to bring these beasts, birds, and insects all together in one spot? The task seems superhuman. Some species could be found only in very remote places—the kangaroo only in Australia, the sloth only in South America, the polar bear only in the Arctic regions. How could Noah, in those days of difficult locomotion, have journeyed in search of these across broad rivers, and over continents and oceans? Did he bring them singly to his dwelling-place in Asia, or did he travel hither and thither with his menagerie, and finish the collection before returning home? There are, according to Hugh Miller, 1,658 known species of mammalia, 6,266 of birds, 642 of reptiles, and 550,000 of insects; howcouldone man, or a hundred men, have collected specimens of these in those days, and in such & brief space of time? The beasts, clean and unclean, male and female, might be got together by means of terrible exertion; but surely to assemble the birds and reptiles and insects must transcend human capacity. Some of the last class would of course not require much seeking; they visit us whether we desire their company or not; and the difficulty would not be how to get them into the ark, but how on earth to keep them out. Others, however, would give infinite trouble. Fancy Noah occupied in awild-goosechase, or selecting specimens from a wasps' or hornets' nest, or giving assiduous chase to a vigilant and elusive bluebottle fly!

But suppose Noah to have succeeded in his arduous enterprise, the question still remains, how did he keep his wonderful zoological collection alive? Some of them could live only in certain latitudes; the inhabitants of cold climates would melt away amidst the torrid heat of Central Asia. Then, again, there are some insects that live only a few hours, and some that live a few days at the utmost: what means were adopted for preserving these? Some animals, too, do not pair, but run in herds; many species of fish swim in shoals; sometimes males and sometimes females predominate, as in the case of deer, where one male heads and appropriates a whole herd of females, or in the case of bees, where many males are devoted to the queen of the hive. These could not have gone in pairs, or lived in pairs; their instincts pointed to another method of grouping. How did Noah provide fortheirdue preservation? When these questions are answered others speedily arise; in fact, there is no end to the difficulties of this marvellous story.

2. Whence and how did Noah procure the food for his huge menagerie? That he was obliged to do so, that the animals were not miraculously preserved without food, we are certain; for he was expressly commanded by God to gather food for himself and for them. "Take thou unto thee," it was said to him, "of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them." What provision was made for thecarnivorousanimals, for lions, tigers, vultures, kites, and hawks? Some of these would require not simply meat, butfreshmeat, which could not be provided for them unless superfluous animals were taken into the ark to be killed, or Noah had learned the art of potting flesh. Otters would require fish, chameleons flies, woodpeckers grubs, night-hawks moths, and humming-birds the honey of flowers. What vast quantities of water also would be consumed! In fact, the task of collecting food to last all the inmates of the ark, including the eight human beings, for more than a year, must have been greater even than that of bringing them together in the first place from every zone. The labors of Hercules were mere trifles compared with those of Noah. Poor old patriarch! He amply earnedhissalvation. Had he been possessed of one tithe of Jacob's cunning and business sagacity, he would have struck a better bargain with God, and have got into the ark on somewhat easier terms. Few men would have undertaken so much to gain so little.

3. How were all the animals, with their food, got into the ark? The dimensions as given in the Bible would be insufficient to accommodate a tithe of them; the ark could not have contained them all, if they were packed together like herrings or sardines. Even if they were so packed, space would still be required for their food; and for what a vast quantity! An animal even with man's moderate appetite would consume in the course of twelve months solid matter to the extent of four or five times its own weight, and some animals are of course far more voracious. This difficulty as to stowing the animals and their food into the ark is quite insuperable; it is not to be obviated by any employment of miraculous intervention. Not even omnipotence can make a

clock strike less than one, and God himself must fail to make two things occupy the same space at the same time.

4. How where the inmates of this floating menagerie, supposing them got in, supplied with fresh air? According to the Bible narrative the ark was furnished with but one window of a cubit square, and one door which was shut by God himself, and it may be presumed, quite securely fastened. Talk about the Black-hole of Calcutta, why it was nothing to this! What a scramble there must have been for that solitary window and a mouthful of fresh air! Lions, tigers, jackals, hyaenas, boa-constrictors, kangaroos, eagles, owls, bees, wasps, bluebottles, with Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their wives, all in one fierce melee. But the contention for the precious vital air must, however violent, have soon subsided: fifteen minutes would have settled them all. Yet curiously enough the choking animals-suffered no appreciable injury; by some occult means they were all preserved from harm; which furnishes another illustration of the mysterious ways of God. What powerful perfumes, too, must have arisen from all those animals! So powerful indeed that even the rancid flavor of foxes and skunks must have been undistinguishable from the blended scents of all their fellow passengers. Those who have visited Wombwell's menagerie, or stood in the monkey-house of the Zoological Gardens, doubtless retain a lively recollection of olfactory disgust, even although in those places the must scrupulous cleanliness is observed; but their experience of such smells would have been totally eclipsed if they could but for a moment have stood within Noah's ark amidst all its heterogeneous denizens. However the patriarch and his sons managed to cleanse this worse than Augean stable passes all understanding. And then what trampings they must have had up and down those flights of stairs communicating with the three storeys of the ark, in order to cast all the filth out of that one window. No wonder their children afterwards began to build a tower of Babel to reach unto heaven; it was quite natural that they should desire plenty of steps, to mount, so as to gratify fully the itch of climbing they had inherited from their parents.

5. Where did all the water come from? According to the Bible story the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days, and covered all the high hills and mountains under the whole heaven. Now mount Ararat itself, on which the Ark eventually rested, is seventeen thousand feet high, and the utmost peaks of Himalaya are nearly twice as high as that; and to cover the whole earth with water to such a tremendous height would require an immense quantity of water; in fact, about eight times as much as is contained in all the rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans of our globe. Whence did all this water come? The Scripture explanation is sadly insufficient; the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain was upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. The writer evidently thought that there were great fountains at the bottom of the sea, capable of supplying water in unlimited quantities from some central reservoir; but science knows nothing whatever about them; nay, science tells

us that the internal reservoir, if there be one, must contain not water, but liquid fire. Ifthisgreat reservoir poured its contents into the sea, the result would be similar to that frightful catastrophe imagined by the Yankee who wished to see Niagara Falls pour into Mount Vesuvius.

The supply from that quarter thus failing, we are forced back upon the rain which descended from the windows of heaven, wherever they may be. It rained forty days and forty nights. Forty days and forty nights! Why forty million days and nights of rain would not have sufficed. The writer was evidently in total ignorance of the laws of hydrology. The rain which falls from the clouds originally comes from the waters of the earth, being absorbed into the atmosphere by the process of evaporation. The utmost quantity of water that can thus be held in suspense throughout the entire atmosphere is very small; in fact, if precipitated, it would only cover the ground to the depth of about five inches. After the first precipitation of rain, the process of evaporation would have to be repeated; that is, for every additional descent of rain a proportionate quantity of water would have to be extracted from the rivers, lakes, and seas below. Now, surely every sane man must perceive that this pretty juggle could not add one single drop to the previously existing amount of water, any more than a man could make himself rich by taking money out of one pocket and putting it into another. The fabled man who is reported to have occupied himself with dipping up water from one side of a boat and emptying it over on the other, hoping thereby to bale the ocean dry, must have been the real author of this story of Noah and his wonderful ark.

Some Christian writers, such as Dr. Pye Smith, Dr. Barry, and Hugh Miller, have contended that the author of the book of Genesis is describing not a universal but a partial deluge; not a flood which submerged the whole earth, out one that merely covered some particular part of the great Central Asian plains. But surely, apart from any consideration pertaining to the very emphatic language of the text, rational men must perceive that the difficulty is not obviated by this explanation, but rather increased. How could the waters ascend in one place to the height of seventeen thousand feet (the height of Mount Ararat) without overflowing the adjacent districts, and, indeed, the whole earth, in conformity to the law of gravitation? Delitzch is bold enough to assert that the flood of water was ejected with such force from the fountains beneath that it assumed quite naturally a conical shape. But then, even supposing that this explication were anything but sheer silliness, which it is not, how would the learned commentator account for the water retaining its conical shape for months after the force of upheaval had expended itself? These explanations are entirely fanciful and groundless. The language of the narrative is sufficiently explicit "Andallflesh died that moved upon the earth;" "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life;" "and every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground;" and "Noahonlyremained alive and they that were with him in the ark." Such are the precise unmistakeable words of Scripture, which no sophistry can explain away. But even if the

contention for a partial deluge could be made good, the fundamental difficulties would still remain. As Colenso observes, the flood, "whether it be regarded as auniversalor apartialdeluge, is equally incredible and impossible."

Geology absolutely contradicts the possibility of any such catastrophe as the deluge within the historic period. According to Sir Charles Lyell, no devastating flood could have passed over the forest zone of Ætna during the last twelve thousand years; and the volcanic cones of Auvergne, which enclose in their ashes the remains of extinct animals, and present an outline as perfect as that of Ætna, are deemed older still. Kalisch forcibly presents this aspect of the question: "Geology teaches the impossibility of a universal deluge since the last six thousand years, but does not exclude a partial destruction of the earth's surface within that period. The Biblical text, on the other hand, demands the supposition of a universal deluge, and absolutely excludes a partial flood."

6. What became of all the fish? In such a deluge the rivers and seas must have mingled their waters, and this, in conjunction with the terrific outpour from the windows of heaven, must have made the water brackish, too salt for fresh-water fish, and too fresh for salt-water fish; and consequently the aquatic animals must all have perished, unless, indeed, they were miraculously preserved—a contingency which anyone is free to conjecture, out no one is at liberty to assert, seeing that the inspired writer never even hints such a possibility. Now there is no evidence whatever that Noah took andfishwith him into the ark; under natural circumstances they must have perished outside; yet the seas and rivers still teem with life. When did the new creation of fish take place?

7. What became of all the vegetation? Every particle of it must have rotted during such a long submergence. But even if mysteriously preserved from natural decay, it must still have been compressed into a mere pulp by the terrific weight of the super-incumbent water. Colenso estimates that the pressure of a column of water 17,000 feet high would be 474 tons upon each square foot of surface—a pressure which nothing could have resisted. Yet, wonderful to relate, just prior to the resting of the ark on Mount Ararat, the dove sent out therefrom returned with an olive leaf in her mouthjust pluckt off. A fitting climax to this wonderful story.

Finally the story relates how the ark rested on the top of Mount Ararat, whence its inmates descended to the plains below, which were then quite dry. Mount Ararat towers aloft three thousand feet above the region of eternal snow. How the poor animals, aye, even the polar bear, must have shivered! And what a curious sight it must have been to witness their descent from such a height Often have I speculated on the probable way in which the elephant got down, and after much careful thought I have concluded thus: either he had waxed so fat with being fed so

long on miraculous food that he rolled pleasantly down like a ball, with no other injury than a few scratches; or he had become so very, very thin with living simply on expectations, in default of more substantial fare, that he gently floated down by virtue of levity, like a descending feather.

And then what journeys some of the poor animals would have to make; the kangaroo back to Australia, the sloth to South America, the polar bear to the extreme north. How they lived on the road to their ultimate destinations the Lord only knows. There was no food for them; the deluge had destroyed all vegetation for the herbiverous animals, all flesh for the carniverous. Not even a nibble was left for the sheep.

As for poor Noah, the first thing recorded of him after his watery expedition is that he drank heavily of wine and got into a state of beastly inebriation. And who can wonder that he did so? The poor old man had floated about on oceans of water for more than a year, and probably he was heartily sick of his watery prospect. The astonishing thing is that he did not get water on the brain. It was quite natural that he should swill deep potations of some stronger fluid on the first available opportunity. Surely he had water enough during that twelve months to last a lifetime; enough to justify his never touching the wretched fluid again.

While Noah was dead drunk, his second son. Ham, saw "the nakedness of his father," and reported the fact to his two brethren, who took a garment and, walking backwards so that they might not see, covered the patriarch's nudity. On recovering from his drunken stupor, Noah discovered "what his younger son had done unto him," and proceeded at once to vigorous cursing. Ham was the offender, if there was any offence at all, which is not very clear; but punishment in the Bible is generally vicarious, and we read that the irate patriarch cursed Canaan, the son of Ham, for his father's misdemeanor. Flagitiously unjust as it is, this proceeding thoroughly accords with Jehovah's treatment of Adam's posterity after he and Eve had committed their first sin by eating of the forbidden fruit.

Before Noah got drunk he had received from God the assurance that the world should never more be destroyed by a flood. As a perpetual sign of this covenant the rainbow was set in the heavens. But the rainbow must have been a common sight for centuries before. This phenomenon of refraction is the result of natural causes which operated before the Flood, as well as after. The earth yielded its fruits for human sustenance, and therefore rain must have fallen. If rain fell before the Deluge, as we are bound to conclude, the rainbow must have been then as now. The usual practice of commentators is to explain this portion of the narrative by assuming that the rainbow was visible before the covenant with Noah, but only after the covenant had a special significance. But, as Colenso observes, the writer of the story supposes

the rainbow was then first set in the clouds, and is evidently accounting for theoriginof this beautiful phenomenon, which might well appearsupernatural to his uninstructed imagination.

Besides the manifold absurdities of this story there are other aspects of it even more startling. What a picture it presents of fiendish cruelty and atrocious vindictiveness! What an appalling exhibition of divine malignity! God, the omnipotent and omniscient ruler of the universe, is represented as harboring and executing the most diabolical intentions. He ruthlessly exterminates all his children except a favored few, and includes in his vengeance the lower animals also, although they were innocent of offence against his laws. Every creature in whose nostrils was the breath of life, with the exception of those persevered in the ark, was drowned, and the earth was turned into a vast slaughter-house. How imagination pictures the terrible scene as the waters rise higher and higher, and the ravening waves speed after their prey! Here some wretched being, baffled and hopeless, drops supinely into the raging flood; there a stronger and stouter heart struggles to the last. Here selfish ones battling for their own preservation; there husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and maidens, affording mutual aid, or at last, in utter despair, locked in a final embrace and meeting death together. And when the waters subside, what a sickening scene presents itself! Those plains, once decked with verdure, and lovely in the sun and breeze, are covered with the bones of a slaughtered world. How can the Christian dare to justify such awful cruelty? The God of the Pentateuch is not a beneficent universal father, but an almighty fiend.

This story of Noah's Flood is believed still because people never examine what is taught them as the word of God. Every one who analyses the story must pronounce it the most extraordinary amalgam of immorality and absurdity ever palmed off on a credulous world.

EVE AND THE APPLE.

BIBLE ROMANCES.-3.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity is based upon the story of the Fall. In Adam all sinned, as in Christ all must be sayed. Saint Paul gives to this doctrine the high sanction of his name, and we may disregard the puny whipsters of theology, who, without any claim to inspiration, endeavor to explain the Genesaic narrative as an allegory rather than a history. If Adam did not really fall he could not have been cursed for falling, and his posterity could not have become partakers either in a sin which was never committed or in a malediction which was never pronounced. Nor can Original Sin be a true dogma if our first parents did not transmit the germs of iniquity to their children. If Adam did not

fall there was no need for Christ to save us; if he did not set God and man at variance there was no need for an atonement; and so the Christian scheme of salvation would be afiascofrom beginning to end. This will never do. No Garden of Eden, no Gethsemane! No Fall, no Redemption! No Adam, no Christ!

Mother Eve's curiosity was the motive of the first transgression of God's commandments in the history of the world, and the whole human race was brought under the risk of eternal perdition because of her partiality to fruit. Millions of souls now writhe in hell because, six thousand years ago, she took a bite of an apple. What a tender and beautiful story! God made her to be Adam's helpmeet. She helped him to a slice of apple, and that soon helped them both outside Eden. The sour stuff disagreed with him as it did with her. It has disagreed, with all their posterity. In fact it was endowed with the marvellous power of transmitting spiritual stomach-ache through any number of generations.

How do we know that it was anappleand not some other fruit? Why, on the best authority extant after the Holy Scriptures themselves, namely, our auxiliary Bible, "Paradise Lost;" in the tenth book whereof Satan makes the following boast to his infernal peers after his exploit in Eden:—

"Him by fraud I have seducedFrom his Creator, and, the more to increaseYour wonder, with anapple."

Yet another authority is the profane author of "Don Juan," who, in the first stanza of the tenth canto, says of Newton:

"And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,Since Adam, with a fall, or with anapple."

Milton, being very pious, was probably in the counsel of God. How else could he have given us an authentic version of the long colloquies that were carried on in heaven? Byron, being very profane, was probably in the counsel of Satan. And thus we have the most unimpeachable testimony of two opposite sources to the fact that it was anapple, and not a rarer fruit, which overcame the virtue of our first parents, and played the devil with their big family of children.

This apple grew on the Tree of Knowledge, which God planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden, sternly enjoining Adam and Eve not to eat of its fruit under pain of death. Now the poor woman knew nothing of death and could not understand what a dreadful punishment it was; and there was the fruit dangling before her eyes every hour of the day. Is it any wonder that she brooded incessantly on the one thing forbidden, that her woman's curiosity was irresistably piqued by it, and that at last her longing grew so intense that she exclaimed, "Dear me! I can't

refrain any longer. Let the consequences be what they will, I must have a bite." God made the woman; he knew her weakness; and he must have known that the plan he devised to test her obedience was the most certain trap that could be invented. Jehovah played with poor Eve just as a cat plays with a mouse. She had free-will, say the theologians. Yes, and so has the mouse a free run. But the cat knows she can catch it again, and finish it off when she is tired of playing.

Not only did God allow Eve's curiosity to urge her on to sin, he also permitted the serpent, "more subtil than any beast of the field," to supplement its action. This wily creature is popularly supposed to have been animated on the occasion by the Devil himself; although, as we shall explain in anotherRomanceentitled "The Bible Devil," the book of Genesis makes not even the remotest allusion to such a personage. If, however, the tempterwasthe Devil, what chance had the poor woman against his seductive wiles? And even if he was only a serpent, he was very "subtil" as we are told, and able to talk like a book, and we know that these creatures have fatal powers of fascination. Surely Mother Eve was heavily handicapped. God might have given her fair play, and left her to fight the battle without furnishing auxiliaries to the strong side.

The serpent, we have said, could converse in human speech. His conversation and his conduct will be dealt with in theRomancejust referred to. Suffice it here to say that he plainly told the woman that God was a liar. "He," said the tempter, "has said ye shall surely die if ye touch the fruit of this tree. Don't believe it. I tell you, ye shall not surely die." What could poor Eve think? In addition to her native curiosity here was another incentive to disobedience. Which of these two spoke the truth? There was only one way of deciding. She stretched forth her hand, plucked an apple, and began to eat. And immediately, says Milton,

"Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woeThat all was lost."

What a rumpus about a trifle! It reminds us of the story of a Jew who had a sneaking inclination for a certain meat prohibited by his creed. One day the temptation to partake was too strong; he slipped into a place of refreshment and ordered some sausages. The weather happened to be tempestuous, and just as he raised his knife and fork to attack the savory morsel, a violent clap of thunder nearly frightened him out of his senses. Gathering courage, he essayed a second time, but another thunderclap warned him to desist. A third attempt was foiled in the same way. Whereupon he threw down his knife and fork and made for the door, exclaiming "What a dreadful fuss about a little bit of pork."

Eve's transgression, according to the learned Lightfoot, occurred "abouthigh noone, the time of eating." The same authority informs us that she and Adam "did lie comfortlesse, till towards the

cool of the day, orthree o'clock afternoon." However that may be, it is most certain that the first woman speedily got the better of the first man. She told him the apple was nice and he took a bite also. Perhaps he had resolved to share her fortunes good or bad, and objected to be left alone with his menagerie. Lightfoot describes the wife as "the weaker vessell," but a lady friend of ours says that the Devil stormed the citadel first, knowing well that such a poor outpost as Adam could easily be carried afterwards.

Having eaten of the fruit, and thus learned to distinguish between good and evil, Adam and Eve quickly discovered that they were naked. So they "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." We are not told who gave them lessons in sewing. Perhaps they acquired the art through intuition. But the necessary implements could not have been gained in that way. Dr. Thomas Burnet, whose mind was greatly exercised by the astounding wonders of the Bible, very pertinently asked "Whence had they a needle, whence a thread, on the first day of their creation?" He, however, could give no answer to the question, nor can we, except we suppose that some of the female angels had attended a "garden party" in Eden and carelessly left their needles and thread behind them. Any reader who is dissatisfied with this explanation must inquire of the nearest parson, who, as he belongs to a class supposed to know almost everything, and believed to have access to the oracles of God, will doubtless be able to reveal the whole gospel truth on the subject.

A little later, God himself, who is everywhere at once, came down from everywhere to the Garden of Eden, for the purpose of taking a "walk in the cool of the day." He had perhaps just visited the infernal regions to see that everything was ready for the reception of the miserable creatures he meant to damn, or to assure himself that the Devil was really not at home; and was anxious to cool himself before returning to his celestial abode, as well as to purify himself from the sulphurous taint which might else have sent a shudder through all the seraphic hosts. Apparently he was holding a soliloquy, for Adam and Eve "heard his voice." Colenso, however, renders this portion of the Romance differently from our authorised version—"And they heard the sound of Jehovah-Elohim walking in the garden in the breeze of the day." Delitzsch thinks they heard the sound of his footsteps, for God used to visit them in the form of a man! Could the force of folly farther go? Any devout Theist, who candidly thought over this petty fiction, would find its gross anthropomorphism inexpressibly shocking.

Knowing that God was everywhere, Adam and Eve nevertheless "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." But they were soon dragged forth to the light. Adam, who seems to have been a silly fellow, explained that he had hidden himself because he wasnaked, as though the Lord had not seen him in that state before. "Naked!" said the Lord, "Who told thee that thou wast naked. Hast thou eaten of that tree, eh?" "O, Lord, yes,"

replied Adam; "just a little bit; but it wasn't my fault,shemade me do it, O Lord! O Lord!" Whereupon God, who although he knows everything, even before it happens, was singularly ill-informed on this occasion, turned fiercely upon the woman, asking her what she had done. "Oh, if you please," whimpered poor Eve, "itwasI who took the first bite; but the serpent beguiled me, and the fault you see is not mine but his. Oh dear! oh dear!" Then the Lord utterly lost his temper. He cursed the serpent, cursed the woman, cursed the man, and even cursed the ground beneath their feet Everything about at the time came in for a share of the malison. In fact, it was what the Yankees would call a good, all-round, level swear.

The curse of the serpent is a subject we must reserve for our pamphlet on "The Bible Devil," The curse of the woman was that she should bring forth children in pain and sorrow, and that the man should rule over her. With her present physiological condition, woman must always have suffered during conception as she now does; and therefore Delitzsch infers that her structure must have undergone a change, although he cannot say in what respect He dwells also on the "subjection" of woman, which "the religion of Revelation" has made by degrees more endurable; probably forgetting that the Teutonic women of ancient times were regarded with veneration, long before Christianity originated. Besides, the subordination of the female is not peculiar to the human race, but is the general law throughout the animal world.

Adam's curse was less severe. He was doomed to till the ground, and to earn his bread by the sweat of his face. Most of us would rather take part in the great strenuous battle of life, than loll about under the trees in the Garden of Eden, chewing the cud like contemplative cows. What men have had to complain of in all ages is, not that they have to earn their living by labour, but that when the sweat of their faces has been plenteously poured forth the "bread" has too often not accrued to them as the reward of their industry.

Orthodox Christianity avers that all the posterity of Adam and Eve necessarily participate in their curse, and the doctrine of Original Sin is taught from all its pulpits. Only by baptism can the stains of our native guilt be effaced; and thus the unbaptized, even infants, perish everlastingly, and hell, to use the words of a Protestant divine, holds many a babe not a span long. A great Catholic divine says—"Hold thou most firmly, nor do thou in any respect doubt, that infants, whether in their mothers' wombs they begin to live and then die, or when, after their mothers have given birth to them, they pass from this life without the sacrament of holy baptism, will be punished with the everlasting punishment of eternal fire." Horror of horrors! These men call sceptics blasphemers, but they are the real blasphemers when they attribute to their God such supreme injustice and cruelty. What should we think of a legislator who proposed that the descendants of all thieves should be imprisoned, and the descendants of all murderers hung? We should think

that he was bad or mad. Yet this is precisely analogous to the conduct ascribed to God, who should be infinitely wiser than the wisest man and infinitely better than the best.

The crime of our first parents was indeed pregnant with the direst consequences. It not only induced the seeds of original sin, but it also brought death into the world. Milton sings—

"Of man's first disobedience,And the fruit Of that forbidden tree,Whose mortal tasteBrought death into the world."

And Saint Paul (Romans v., 12) writes "As by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin."

Now this theory implies that before the Fall the inhabited portion of the world was the scene of perfect peace. Birds lived on seeds and eschewed worms, and the fierce carniverous animals grazed like oxen. The lion laid down with the lamb. "Waal," said the Yankee, "I don't doubt that, but I raythergues the lamb wasinside." The fact is that most of the carnivorous animals could not live on a vegetable drat; and therefore they must either have subsisted on flesh before the Fall, which of course involvesdeath, or their natures must have undergone a radical change. The first supposition contradicts scripture, and the second contradicts science.

Geology shows us that in the very earliest times living creatures died from the same causes which kill them now. Many were overwhelmed by floods and volcanoes, or engulphed by earthquakes; many died of old age or disease, for their bones are found distorted or carious, and their limbs twisted with pain; while the greater number were devoured, according to the general law of the struggle for existence. Death ruled universally before the human race made its appearance on the earth, and has absolutely nothing to do with Eve and her apple.

Adam and Eve were warned by God that in the day they ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge they should surely die. The serpent declared this to be rank nonsense, and the event proved his veracity. What age Eve attained to the Holy Bible saith not, for it never considers women of sufficient importance to have their longevities chronicled. But Adam lived to the remarkably good old age of nine hundred and thirty years. Like our Charles the Second he took "an unconscionable time a-dying." One of his descendants, the famous Methusaleh, lived thirty-nine years longer; while the more famous Melchizedek is not even dead yet, if any credence is to be placed in the words of holy Saint Paul.

But all these are mere lambs, infants, or chicken, in comparison with the primeval patriarchs of India. Buckle tells us that, according to the Hindoos, common men in ancient times lived to the age of 80,000 years, some dying a little sooner and some a little later. Two of their kings,

Yudhishther and Alarka, reigned respectively 27,000 and 66,000 years. Both these were cut off in their prime; for some of the early poets lived to be about half a million; while one king, the most virtuous as well as the most remarkable of all, was two million years old when he began to reign, and after reigning 6,800,000 years, he resigned his empire and lingered on for 100,000 years more. Adam is not in the hunt with that tough old fellow. On the principle that it is as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb, faithful Christians should swallow him as well as Adam. When the throat of their credulity is once distended they may as well take in everything that comes. What followed the Curse clearly shows that man was not originally created immortal. Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden expressly in order that they might not become so. God "drove them forth" lest they should "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." Many orthodox writers, who have to maintain the doctrine of our natural immortality, preserve a discreet silence on this text. Our great Milton, who has so largely determined the Protestant theology of England, goes right in the face of Scripture when he makes God say of man,

"I at first with two fair giftsCreated him endowed, with happinessAndimmortality."

The fact is, the Book of Genesis never once alludes to any such thing, nor does it represent man as endowed with any other soul than that "breath of life" given to all animals. It is also certain that theancientJews were entirely ignorant of the doctrine of a life beyond the grave. The highest promise that Moses is said to have made in the Decalogue was that their "days should be long in the land." The Jews were a business people, and they wanted all promises fulfilled on this side of death.

Nor is there any realFallimplied in this story. God himself says that "the man," having eaten of the forbidden fruit, "is become as one of us." That could scarcely be a fall which brought him nearer to God. Bishop South, indeed, in a very eloquent passage of his sermon on "Man Created in God's Image," celebrates the inconceivable perfection of the first man, and concludes by saying that "An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise." But a candid perusal of Genesis obliges us to dissent from this view, Adam and Eve were a very childish pair. Whatever intellect they possessed they carefully concealed. Not a scintillation of it has reached us. Shakespeare and Newton are an infinite improvement on Adam and Eve. One of the Gnostic sects, who played such havoc with the early Christian Church, utterly rejected the idea of a Fall. "The Ophites," says Didron, "considered the God of the Jews not only to be a most wicked but an unintelligent being.... According to their account, Jalda-baoth, the wicked demi-god adored by the Jews under the name of Jehovah, was jealous of man, and wished to prevent the progress of knowledge; but the serpent, the agent of superior wisdom, came to teach man what course he ought to pursue, and by what means he might regain the knowledge of good and evil. The Ophites consequently adored the serpent, and cursed the true God Jehovah."

Before expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, the Lord took pity on their nakedness, and apparently seeing that their skill in needle-work did not go beyond aprons, he "made coats of skins, and clothed them." Jehovah was thus the first tailor, and the prototype of that imperishable class of workmen, of whom it was said that it takes nine of them to make a man. He was also the first butcher and the first tanner, for he must have slain the animals and dressed their skins.

Lest they should return he "placed at the east of the Garden of EdenCherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." As this guard seems never to have been relieved, profane wits have speculated whether the Flood drowned them, and quenched the flaming sword with a great hiss. Ezekiel describes the Cherubims with characteristic magnificence. These creatures with wings and wheels were "full of eyes round about." And "everyone had low faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle." What monsters! No wonder they effectually frightened poor Adam and Eve from attempting a re-entrance into the Garden.

Perhaps the reader would like to know what became of the Tree of Knowledge. One legend of the Middle Ages relates that Eve along with the forbidden fruit broke off a branch which she carried with her from Paradise. Planted outside by her hand, it grew to a great tree, under which Abel was killed; at a later time it was used in building the most holy place of Solomon's temple; and finally it yielded the beams out of which the cross was made! Another legend says that, after the Fall, God rooted out the Tree of Knowledge, and flung it over the wall of Paradise. A thousand years after it was found by Abraham, none the worse for its long absence from the soil. He planted it in his garden, and while doing so he was informed by a voice from heaven that this was the tree on whose wood the Redeemer should be crucified.

Space does not allow us to dwell at length on the Paradise Myths of other ancient peoples, which singularly resembled that of the Jews. Formerly it was alleged that these were all corruptions of the Genesaic story. But it is now known that most of them date long anterior to the very existence of the Jewish people. As Kalisch says, "they belonged to the common traditionary lore of the Asiatic nations." The Bible story of Paradise is derived almost entirely from the Persian myth. It was after contact with the reformed religion of Zoroaster, during their captivity, that the remnant of the Jews who returned to Palestine collated their ancient literature, and revised it in accordance with their new ideas. The story of Eve and her Apple is, as every scholar knows, an oriental myth slightly altered by the Jewish scribes to suit the national taste, and has absolutely no claims on our credence. And if this be so, the doctrine of the Fall collapses, and down comes the whole Christian structure which is erected upon it.

THE BIBLE DEVIL.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—4.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Christian Godhead is usually spoken and written of as a Trinity, whereas it is in fact a Quaternion, consisting of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and God the Devil. The Roman Catholics add yet another, Goddess the Virgin Mary. God the Devil, whom thisRomancetreats of so far as his history is contained in the Bible, is popularly supposed to be inferior to the other persons of the Godhead. In reality, however, he is vastly their superior both in wisdom and in power. For, whereas they made the world, he has appropriated it almost entirely to himself; and, whereas they who created all its inhabitants, have only been able to lay down a very narrow-gauge railway to the Kingdom of Heaven, he has contrived to lay down an exceedingly broad-gauge railway to the Kingdom of Hell. Few passengers travel by their route, and its terminus on this side is miserably small; but his route is almost universally patronised, its terminus is magnificent, and there is an extraordinary rush for tickets.

According to the Christian scheme, the Devil tempted Adam and Eve from their allegiance to God in the form of a serpent. He played the devil with Eve, she played the devil with Adam, and together they have played the Devil with the whole human race ever since.

But let any unbiassed person read the Genesaic story of the Fall, and he will certainly discover no reference to the Devil A serpent is spoken of as "more subtle than any beast of the field;" it is throughout represented simply as a serpent; and nowhere is there the faintest indication of its possessing any supernatural endowments.

The Story of the Fall contains clear relics of that Tree and Serpent worship which in ancient times prevailed so extensively over the East. The serpent was formerly regarded as the symbol of a beneficent God. In Hindustan, says Maurice, "the veneration of the serpent is evident in every page of their mythologic history, in which every fabulous personage of note is represented as grasping or as environed with a serpent." According to Lajard, the word which signifies "life" in the greater part of the Semitic languages signifies also "a serpent" And Jacob Bryant says that the word "Ab," which in Hebrew means Father, has also the same meaning as the Egyptian "Ob," or "Aub," and signifies "a serpent," thus etymologically uniting the two ideas. The Tree and the Serpent were frequently associated, although they were sometimes worshipped apart. The Aryan races of the Western world mostly worshipped the Tree alone. The Scandinavians had their great ash "Yggdrasill," whose triple root reaches to the depths of the universe, while its

majestic stem overtops the heavens and its branches fill the world. The Grecian oracles were delivered from the oak of Dodona, and the priests set forth their decrees on its leaves. Nutpi or Neith, the goddess of divine life, was by the Egyptians represented as seated among the branches of the Tree of Life, in the paradise of Osiris. The "Hom," the sacred tree of the Persians, is spoken of in the Zendavesta as the "Word of Life," and, when consecrated, was partaken of as a sacrament. An oak was the sacred tree of the ancient Druids of Britain. We inherit their custom of gathering the sacred mistletoe at Yule-tide, while in our Christmas Tree we have a remnant of the old Norse tree-worship. During the Middle Ages the worship of trees was forbidden in France by the ecclesiastical councils, and in England by the laws of Canute. A learned antiquary remarks that "the English maypole decked with colored rags and tinsel, and the merry morice-dancers (the gaily decorated May sweeps) with the mysterious and now almost defunct personage, Jack-in-the-green, are all but worn-out remnants of the adoration of gods in trees that once were sacred in England."

Now the serpent and the tree were originally both symbolic of the generative powers of nature, and they were interchangeable. Sometimes one was employed, sometimes the other, and sometimes both. But in that great religious reformation which took place in the faiths of the ancient world about 600 years before the time of Christ, the serpent was degraded, and made to stand as a symbol of Ahriman, the god of evil, who, in the Persic religion, waged incessant war against Ormuzd, the god of beneficence. The Persian myth of the Fall is thus rendered from the Zendavesta by Kalisch:—

"The first couple, the parents of the human race, Meshia and Meshiane, lived originally in purity and innocence. Perpetual happiness was promised them by Ormuzd, the creator of every good gift, if they persevered in their virtue. But an evil demon (Dev) was sent to them by Ahriman, the representative of everything noxious and sinful. He appeared unexpectedly in the form of a serpent, and gave them the fruit of a wonderful tree, Hom, which imparted immortality and had the power of restoring the dead to life. Thus evil inclinations entered their hearts; all their moral excellence was destroyed. Ahriman himself appeared wider the form of the same reptile, and completed the work of seduction. They acknowledged him instead of Ormuzd as the creator of everything good; and the consequence was they forfeited for ever the eternal happiness for which they were destined."

Every reader will at once perceive how similar this is to the Hebrew story of the Fall. The similarity is intelligible when we remember that all the literature of the ancient Jews was put into its present form by the learned scribes who returned with the remnant of the people from the Babylonish captivity, and who were full of the ideas that obtained in the Persian religion as reformed by the traditional Zoroaster.

As we have said, the Hebrew story of the Fall contains clear relics of Tree and Serpent worship. There is also abundant proof that during the long ages in which the Jews oscillated between polytheism and monotheism this worship largely prevailed. Even up to the reign of Hezekiah, as we find in the Second Book of Kings, the serpent was worshipped in groves, to the great anger of the king, who cast out the idolatry from among his people.

Having explained the subject thus, let us now assume with orthodox Christians that the serpent in Eden was animated by the Devil, or was indeed the Devil himself incarnate.

We have already observed that the Devil excels his three rivals in wisdom and in power. While they were toiling so strenuously to create the world and all that therein is, he quietly stood or sat by as a spectator. "All right," he might have murmured, "work away as hard as you please. You've more strength than sense. My turn will soon come. When the job is finished we shall see to whom all this belongs." When the work was completed and they had pronounced all things good, in stepped the Devil, and in the twinkling of an eye rendered imperfect all that they had so labored to create perfect;'turning everything topsy-turvey, seducing the first pair of human beings, sowing the seeds of original sin, and at one stroke securing the wholesale damnation of our race. What were they about, to let him do all this with such consummate ease? Surely they must have slept like logs, and thus left the whole game in his hands. He made himself the "prince of this world," although they created it; and if those may laugh who win, he was entitled to roar out his mirth to the shaking of the spheres.

Besides being the prince of this world and of the powers of darkness, the Devil is described as the father of lies. This, however, is a gross libel on his character. Throughout the contest with his rivals he played with perfect fairness. And from Genesis to Revelation there can be adduced no single instance in which he departs from the strict line of truth. On one occasion when Jehovah desired a lying spirit to go forth and prophesy falsely to his people, he found one ready to his hand in heaven and had no need to trouble Satan for a messenger. The Lord God had told Adam, "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thow shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thow shalt surely die." Nay, said the Devil, when he began business "ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Every word of his speech was true. Instead of dying "in the day" that he ate of the fruit Adam lived to the fine old age of nine hundred and thirty years.

And after the "fall" the Lord God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." The Devil's truthfulness is thus amply vindicated.

Satan's visit to Eve was paid in the form of a serpent. She manifested no astonishment at being accosted by such a creature. It may be that the whole menagerie of Eden spoke in the human tongue, and that Balaam's ass was only what the biologists would call "a case of reversion" to the primitive type. Josephus and most of the Fathers conceived of the serpent as having had originally a human voice and legs; so that if he could not have walked about with Eve arm in arm, he might at least have accompanied her in a dance. Milton, however, discredits the legs, and represents the serpent thus:

"Not with indented wave,Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,Circular base of rising folds, that towered,Fold above fold, a surging maze, his headCrested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;With burnish'd neck of verdant gold, erectAmidst his circling spires, that on the grassFloated redundant."

Very splendid! But the doctors differ, and who shall decide? What followed the eating of the forbidden fruit we have dealt with in "Eve and the Apple." We shall therefore at once come to the curse pronounced upon the serpent "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The final portion of this curse is flagrantly mythological Among the Hindoos, Krishna also, as the incarnation of Vishnu, is represented now as treading on the bruised head of a conquered serpent, and now as entwined by it, and stung in the heel. In Egyptian pictures and sculptures, likewise, the serpent is seen pierced through the head by the spear of the goddess Isis. The "enmity" between mankind and the serpent is, however, not universal Amongst the Zulus the snake is held in great veneration, as their dead ancestors are supposed to reappear in that form; and in ancient times, as we have already observed, serpents were actually worshipped.

The middle portion of the curse has not yet been fulfilled. The serpent lives on more nutritious food than dust. In the Zoological Gardens the inmates of the serpent-house enjoy a more solid diet The fact is, we have here an oriental superstition. Kalisch points out that "the great scantiness of food? on which the serpent can subsist, gave rise to the belief, entertained by many Eastern nations, that they eat dust." This belief is referred to in Micah vii, 17, Isaiah lxv., 25, and elsewhere in the Bible. Among the Indians the serpent is believed to live on wind.

That the serpent "goes" upon its "belly" is, of course, a fact. Before the curse it must have moved about in some other way. Milton's poetical solution of the difficulty we have already given. During

the Middle Ages those seraphic doctors of theology, who gravely argued how many angels could dance on the point of a needle, speculated also on the serpent's method of locomotion before the "fall." Some thought the animal had legs, some that it undulated gracefully on its back, and others that it hopped about on its tail. The ever bold Delitzsch decides that "its mode of motion and its form were changed," but closes the controversy by adding, "of the original condition of the serpent it is, certainly, impossible to frame to ourselves a conjecture." All this is mere moonshine. Geology, as Colenso remarks, shows us that the serpent was the same kind of creature as it is now, in the ages long before man existed on the earth.

Why the serpent was cursed at all is a question which no Christian can answer. The poor animal was seized, mastered, occupied, and employed by the Devil, and was therefore absolutely irresponsible for what occurred. It had committed no offence, and consequently the curse upon it, according to Christian doctrine, was a most brutal and wanton outrage.

Having done such a splendid stroke of business in Eden, the Devil retired, quite satisfied that the direction he had given to the affairs of this world was so strong and certain as to obviate the necessity of his personal supervision. Fifteen centuries later the human race had grown so corrupt that God (that is, the three persons in one) resolved to drown them all; preserving, however, eight live specimens to repeople the world. How the Devil must have laughed again! He knew that Noah and his family possessed the seeds of original sin, which they would assuredly transmit to their children, and thus prolong the corruption through all time. Short-sighted as ever, Jehovah refrained from completing the devastation, after which he might have started afresh. So sure was the Devil's grip on God's creation that, a few centuries after the Flood, there were not found ten righteous men in the whole city of Sodom, and no doubt other cities were almost as bad.

According to the Bible, the Devil's long spell of rest was broken in the reign of King David, the man after God's own heart, but a very great scoundrel nevertheless. The Second Book of Samuel (xxiv., 1) tells us that "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." Now the First Book of Chronicles (xxi, 1) in relating the same incident says, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" Who shall reconcile this discrepancy? Was it God, was it Satan, or was it both? Imagine David with the celestial and infernal powers whispering the same counsel into either ear! A Scotch minister once told us that this difficulty was only apparent. The Devil, said he, exercises only a delegated power, and acts only by the express or tacit permission of God; so that it matters not which is said to have provoked David. Yes, but what of the consequences? Because the king, despite all protests, took a census of his people, the Lord sent

a destroying angel, who slew by pestilence seventy thousand of them. Where, in the whole history of religion, shall we find a viler sample of divine injustice?

Besides, if the Devil acts in all cases only by God's permission, the latter is responsible for all the former's wrongdoing. The principal, and not the agent, must bear the guilt. And this suggests a curious problem. Readers of "Robinson Crusoe" will remember that when Man Friday was undergoing a course of theological instruction, he puzzled his master by asking why God did not convert the Devil. To his unsophisticated mind it was plain that the conversion of the Devil would annihilate sin. Robinson Crusoe changed the subject to avoid looking foolish, but Man Friday's question remains in full force. Why does not God convert the Devil? The great Thomas Aquinas is reported to have prayed for the Devil's conversion through a whole long night. Robert Burns concludes his "Address to the Deil" with a wish that he "wad tak a thought an' men'." And Sterne, in one of his wonderful strokes of pathos, makes Corporal Trim say of the Devil, "He is damned already, your honor;" whereupon, "I am sorry for it," quoth Uncle Toby. Why, oh why, we repeat, does not God convert the Devil, and thus put a stop for ever to the damnation of mankind? Why do not the clergy pray without cease for that one object? Because they dare not. The Devil is their best friend. Abolish him, and disestablish hell, and their occupation would be gone. They must stick to their dear Devil, as their most precious possession, their stock-in-trade, their talisman of power, without whom they were worse than nothing.

The Devil's adventures in the Book of Job are very amusing. One day there was a drawing-room orlevéeheld in heaven. The sons of God attended, and Satan came also among them. He seems to have so closely resembled the rest of the company that only God detected the difference. This is not surprising, for the world has seen some very godly sons of God, so very much like the Devil, that if he met one of them in a dark lane by night, he might almost suspect it to be his own ghost. God, who knows everything, as usual asked a number of questions. Where had Satan been, and what had he been doing? Satan replied, like a gentleman of independent means, that he had been going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it. "Well," said the Lord, "have you observed my servant Job? What a good man! perfect and upright I'm proud of him." Oh yes, Satan had observed him. He keeps a sharp eye on all men. As old Bishop Latimer said, whatever parson is out of his parish the Devil is always in his. "Doth Job fear God for nought?" said Satan. "He is wealthy, prosperous, happy, and respected; you fence him about from evil; but just let trouble come upon him, and he will curse thee to thy face." This was a new view of the subject; the Lord had never seen it in this light before. So he determined to make an experiment. With God's sanction Satan went forth to afflict Job. He despoiled his substance, slaughtered his children, covered him with sore boils from head to foot, and then set on his wife to "nag" him. But Job triumphed; he did not curse God, and thus Satan was foiled. Subsequently Job became richer than ever and more renowned, while a fresh family grew up around his knees. "So," say the

Christians, "all's well that ends well!" Not so, however; for there remains uneffaced the murder of Job's children, who were hurriedly despatched out of the world in the very midst of their festivity. When the celestial and infernal powers play at conundrums, it is a great pity that they do not solve them up above or down below, and leave the poor denizens of this world free from the havoc of their contention.

In the New Testament, as in the Old, the Devil appears early on the scene. After his baptism in Jordan, Jesus was "led up of the spirit in the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." When he had fasted forty days and nights he "was afterward hungered." Doctor Tanner overlooked this. The hunger of Jesus only began on the forty-first day. The Devil requests Jesus to change the stones into bread, but he declines to do so. Then he sets him "on a pinnacle of the temple" in Jerusalem, and desires him to throw himself down. Jesus must have been exceedinglysharp setin that position. Meanwhile, where was the Devil posted? He could scarcely have craned his neck up so as to hold a confabulation with Jesus from the streets, and we must therefore suppose that he was sharp set on another pinnacle. A pretty sight they must have been for the Jews down below! That temptation failing, the Devil takes Jesus "up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth himallthe kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." This is remarkably like seeing round a corner, for however high we go we cannot possibly see the whole surface of a globe at once. "All these things," says Satan, "will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." What a generous Devil! They already belonged to Jesus, for doth not Scripture say the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof?—a text which should now read "the earth is the landlords' and the emptiness thereof." This temptation also fails, and the Devil retires in disgust.

What a pretty farce! Our burlesques and pantomimes are nothing to it. Satan knew Jesus, and Jesus knew Satan. Jesus knew that Satan would tempt him, and Satan knew that Jesus knew it. Jesus knew that Satan could not succeed, and Satan knew so too. Yet they kept the farce up night and day, for no one knows how long; and our great Milton in his "Paradise Regained" represents this precious pair arguing all day long, Satan retiring after sunset, and Jesus lying down hungry, cold and wet, and rising in the morning with damp clothes to renew the discussion.

Soon after Jesus went into the country of the Gergesenes, where he met two fierce men possessed with devils whom he determined to exorcise, The devils (fortheDevil had grown numerous by then), not liking to be turned adrift on the world, without home or shelter, besought Jesus to let them enter the bodies of an herd of swine feeding by. This he graciously permitted. The devils left the men and entered the swine; whereupon the poor pigs, experiencing a novel sensation, never having had devils inside them before, "ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters." Whether the devils were drowned with the pigs this veracious

history saith not. But the pigs themselves were not paid for. Jesus wrought the miracle at other people's expense. And the inhabitants of that part took precisely this view of the case. For "the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts." No doubt they reflected that if he remained working miracles of that kind, at the end of a week not a single pig would be left alive in the district. Entering in Genesis, the Devil appropriately makes his exit in Revelation. The twelfth chapter of that holy nightmare describes him as "a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." What a tail! The writer's ideas of size were very chaotic. Bringing a third part of the stars of heaven to this earth, is much like trying to lodge a few thousand cannon-balls on the surface of a bullet.

Finally the Devil is to be "bound for a thousand years" in hell. Let us hope the chain will be strong; for if it should break, the pit has no bottom, and the Devil would go right through, coming out on the other side to renew his old tricks.

Such is the Romance of the Bible Devil. Was ever a more ludicrous story palmed off on a credulous world? The very clergy are growing ashamed of it. But there it is, inextricably interwoven with the rest of the "sacred" narrative, so that no skill can remove it without destroying the whole fabric. The Devil has been the Church's best friend, but he is doomed, and as their fraternal bond cannot be broken, he will drag it down to irretrievable perdition.

THE TEN PLAGUES;

Or, HOW MOSES HARRIED EGYPT.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—5.

By G. W. FOOTE.

If a man who had never read the Bible before wished to amuse himself during a spare hour among its pages, we should recommend him to try the first fourteen chapters of Exodus. A more entertaining narrative was never penned. Even the fascinating Arabian Nights affords nothing better, provided we read it with the eyes of common sense, and without that prejudice which so often blinds us to the absurdities of "God's Word." At the end of the fourteenth chapter aforesaid, let the book be closed, and then let the reader ask himself whether he ever met with a more comical story. We have no doubt as to his answer; and we feel assured that he will agree with the poet Cowper in thinking that Goddoes"move in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

Two hundred and fifteen years after the arrival of Israel in Egypt, God's chosen people had fallen into slavery. Yet they were exceedingly prolific, so that "the land was filled with them." Afraid of their growing numbers, Pharaoh "spake to the Hebrew midwives" and told them to kill all their male children at birth and leave only the daughters alive. This injunction the midwives very, properly disobeyed, excusing themselves on the ground that "the Hebrew women were lively and were delivered ere the midwives came in unto them." Had they obeyed Pharaoh, the Jewish race would have been extinguished, and Judaism and Christianity been never heard of.

But the comical fact as to these midwives is that there were only two of them, Shiphrah and Puah. What a busy pair they must have been! What patterns of ubiquitous industry! When the Jews quitted Egypt soon after they mustered six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. Now, supposing all these were collected together in one city, its size would equal that of London. How could two midwives possibly attend to all the confinements among such a population? And how much more difficult would their task be if the population were scattered over a wide area, as was undoubtedly the case with the Jews! Words fail us to praise the miraculous activity of these two ladies. Like the peace of God, it passes all understanding.

One of the male children born under the iron rule of Pharaoh was Moses, the son of Amram and Jochebed. The incidents of his eventful life will be fully recorded in our series of "Bible Heroes." Suffice it here to say that he was adopted and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter; that he became skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians; that he privily slew an Egyptian who-had maltreated a Hebrew, and was obliged therefore to flee to the land of Midian, where he married Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro the priest. At this time Moses was getting on to his eightieth year. Now-a-days a man of that age sees only the grave before him, and has pretty nearly closed his account with the world. But in those days it was different. At the age of eighty Moses was just beginning his career. He was indeed a very astonishing old boy.

One day Moses was keeping his father-in-law's flock near Mount Horeb, when lo! a strange vision greeted his eyes. The "angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," which burned without consuming. By "angel" we are to understand a vision or appearance only, for the being within the bush was God Almighty himself; and throughout the rest of the narrative the word "angel" is entirely dropped, only Lord or God being used. Moses approached this wonderful sight; but the Lord called out to him, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Thereupon Moses hid his face "for he was afraid to look upon God." Could anything be more ludicrous! Fancy God, the infinite spirit of the universe, secreting himself in a bush and setting it on fire, just to make a little display for the benefit of Moses! Our wonder, however, is presently lessened; for this God turns out to be only Jehovah "the Lord God of the Hebrews," a mere local deity, who cared only

for his own people, and was quite ready to slaughter any number of the inhabitants of adjacent countries, besides being bitterly jealous of their gods. The utmost claimed for him is that he is the biggest God extant, and quite capable of thrashing all the other gods with one hand tied behind his back. He had heard the cries of his people and had determined to rescue them from bondage. He had also resolved to give Pharaoh and the Egyptians a taste of his quality, so that they might be forced to-admit his superiority to their gods. "I will let them know," said he to Moses, "who I am, and you shall be my agent. We'll confound their impudence before we've done with them. But don't let us be in a hurry, for the little drama I have devised requires a good deal of time. You go to Egypt and ask Pharaoh to let my people go. But don't suppose he will consent. That wouldn't suit my plans at all. I have decided to set you two playing at the little game of 'pull Moses, pull Pharaoh,' and I shall harden his heart against your demands so that there may be a fierce tussle. But don't be afraid. I am on your side, and just at the end of the game I'll join in and pull Pharaoh clean over. And mind you tell him all along that it is my power and not yours which works all the wonders I mean you to perform, for you are only my instrument, and I want all the glory myself. Play fair, Moses, play fair!" Moses was not unwilling to engage in this enterprise, but like a prudent Jew he required certain assurances of success. He therefore first raised an objection as to his own insignificance—"Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" To which God replied, "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." Moses, however, required a much less remote token than this; so he again objected that nobody would believe him. Thereupon the Lord bade him cast his rod on the ground, and lo! it became a serpent Moses very naturally fled before it, till the Lord told him not to run away but to take it by the tail. He did so, and it became again a rod in his hand. Then the Lord bade him put his hand in his bosom, and on taking it out he found it was "leprous as snow." Again he put it in his bosom, and when he plucked it out it was once more sound and well. "There," said the Lord, "those signs will do in Egypt. When you evince them nobody will doubt you." Still hesitant, Moses objected that he was very slow of speech. So he frankly desired the Lord to send someone else. No wonder the Lord grew angry at this persistent reluctance; nevertheless he restrained himself, and informed Moses that his brother Aaron, who was a good speaker, should accompany him. The prudent prophet seems to have been at length satisfied. At any rate he made no further objection, but after a little further conversation with the Lord, who was very talkative, he set forth on his journey to Egypt.

Singular to relate, the Lord met Moses at an inn on the road, and, instead of wishing him good-speed, sought to kill him. What a strange God, to be sure! Why did he want to kill his own messenger? And why, if he wanted to kill him, did he not succeed in doing it? Truly the ways of God are past finding out. The only reason discoverable for this queer conduct is that Moses' boy was uncircumcised. Zipporah, his wife, took a sharp stone and performed the rite of

circumcision herself, casting the amputated morsel at the feet of the boy's father, with the remark that he was "a bloody husband." The Lord's anger was thereby appeased, and the text naively says that he then let Moses go.

Prompted by the Lord, Aaron went out into the wilderness to meet Moses, and they soon appeared together before "all the elders of the children of Israel," who readily believed in their mission when they heard Aaron's account of the Lord's conversation with Moses, and saw the wonderful signs. Afterwards the two brothers visited Pharaoh, but God had hardened his heart; so he denied all knowledge of the Lord, and refused to let Israel go. On the contrary, he commanded the taskmaskers to be even more rigorous with them, and, instead of giving them straw to make bricks, as theretofore, to make them gather straw for themselves. And when they complained, Pharaoh replied that they were an idle lot, and only wanted to go out and sacrifice to the Lord in order to avoid work. Whereupon they remonstrated with Moses for his interference, and he, in turn, remonstrated with God in very plain and disrespectful language. "Nonsense!" said the Lord, "now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh."

Again Pharaoh was visited by the two brothers, who this time commenced to work the miracle. Aaron cast down his rod, and it became a serpent. But the magicians of Egypt, who were present by invitation of the King, were in nowise astonished. "Oh," said they, "is that all you can do?" Saying which, every man of them threw down his rod, and it also became a serpent. That was indeed an age of miracles! The magicians of Egypt wrought this wonder without any help from the Lord, and solely "with their enchantments." Here, then, was a pretty fix! So far, neither side had any advantage. Presently, however, Aaron's serpent—which thus proved itself a truly Jewish one—created a diversion by swallowing all the others up. We must suppose that it afterwards disgorged them, or else that Aaron's, rod was exceedingly stout when he got it back.

Pharaoh's heart remained obdurate, notwithstanding this sign, and he still refused to let the people go. And then the plagues commenced.

The first was a plague of blood. Aaron stretched forth his rod, andallthe waters of Egypt, the streams, the rivers, the ponds, and the pools became blood. Even the water in vessels of stone and wood was ensanguined. The fish all died, and the river stank; and "there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." This was a good start, but the magicians of Egypt beat it hollow; for, after Aaron had turnedallthe water of Egypt into blood, they turned therestinto blood. No wonder that Pharaoh's heart remained hardened! He quietly walked into his house and let the subject drop.

Seven days later Moses went again to Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord, let my people go." And Pharaoh said, "I won't." "Won't you?" answered Moses, "we shall see." Forthwith Aaron stretched forth his rod over the streams, rivers, and ponds, and brought on the second plague in the shape of frogs, which swarmed all over the land. They entered the houses, penetrated to the bedrooms, mounted the beds, slipped into the kneading-troughs, and even got into the ovens, although one would expect frogs to give such hot places a very wide berth. What a squelching of frogs there must have been! The Egyptians could not have stood absolutely still, and the land was covered with them. Still unfoiled, the magicians, "with their enchantments, followed suit, and brought up frogs too." Yet, as the land was already covered with frogs, it is difficult to see how the new comers found room, unless they got on the backs of the others, and went hopping about in couples. Pharaoh now relented. He called for Moses, and said, "Intreat your Lord to take away these nasty frogs, and I will let the people go." "That will I," said Moses, "and you shall know that there is none like unto the Lord our God." The next day the frogs died out of the houses, villages, and fields, and were gathered into heaps, so that again "the land stank." But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart again, "as the Lord had said."

The third act of this tragi-comedy was decisive in one sense, for in it the magicians of Egypt were obliged to retire from the competition. Aaron stretched forth his rod again and smote the dust of the earth, all of which instantly becamelice, in man and in beast. Before this dirty miracle the magicians of Egypt shrank dismayed. They made a feeble and altogether unsuccessful attempt to imitate Aaron's performance, and then drew back, declining to continue the contest. The lice settled them. "This," said they, "is the finger of God." But Pharaoh still refused to knuckle under. Even against the force of this supreme wonder his heart was steeled.

So the fourth plague came. A grievous swarm of flies descended on Egypt, so that "the land was corrupted by reason of them. But not a single fly crossed over into the land of Goshe" where the Jews dwelt. Thereupon Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and told them he was willing to let their people go and sacrifice to the Lord for three days, but not outside Egypt. Moses reiterated his demand for a three days' journey into the wilderness. Whereto Pharaoh replied that they might go, but "not too far." Moses then undertook to banish the flies. And he was as good as his word; for there was made such a clean sweep of them that "not one remained." This precious narrative always runs to extremes. Egypt without a fly in it would be in a very abnormal condition. At ordinary times the land is infested with flies; so much so, indeed, that large numbers of the people suffer from diseased eyes, in consequence of these insects incessantly fastening on the sores caused by the irritating sand which fills the air. It was absurd for this Hebrew story-teller to scotch the last fly; he should have left sufficient to maintain the character of the country.

Again Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and when the flies were banished he refused to "let the people go." So the fifth plague came. A "very grievous murrain," which spared the cattle of Israel, broke out on the cattle of Egypt, and with such virulence that they all died. Pharaoh found on inquiry that there was "not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead," yet for all that his heart was hardened, and he would not let the people go.

So the sixth plague came. Aaron took "handfuls of ashes of the furnace," which Moses sprinkled towards heaven, and "it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man andupon beast." Even the magicians were afflicted. Now the readers will bear in mind thatallthe cattle of Egypt were killed by the fifth, plague. What beasts, then, were these tortured with boils? Were they dead carcasses, or were they live cattle miraculously created in the interim? Surely this is a thing which "no fellah can understand." From the serpent of Eden to Jonah's whale, the animals of the Bible are a queer lot.

Pharaoh's heart remaining still hardened, God commanded Moses to make a special appeal to him, and to get up early in the morning for that purpose. So Moses stood before Pharaoh and said, "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me. If you refuse I shall plague you and your people worse than ever, and so teach you that there is none like me in all the earth. Don't puff yourself up with conceit, for you were made what you are only in order that through you my power might be manifested. You had better cave in at once." But Pharaoh would not harken. He tacitly declared that the Lord God of the Hebrews might go to Jericho.

So the seventh plague came. A fierce hail, accompanied by fire that ran along the ground, smote all that was in the field, both man and beast. It smote alsoeveryherb of the field and brakeeverytree of the field. Only those were saved who "feared the Lord" and stayed in doors with their servants and cattle. Fortunately the wheat and the rice were spared, as they were not grown up; or there would have been a famine in Egypt compared with which the seven years of scarcity in Joseph's time had sunk into insignificance. Pharaoh now relented and repented. "I have sinned this time," he said, "the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." And Moses, seeing that the king had recognised Jehovah as the true cock of the theological walk, procured a cessation of the thunder and the hail. But lo! when Pharaoh perceived this, he hardened his heart again, and "sinned yet more." The obduracy of this potentate, under the manipulation of God, is really becoming monotonous. So the eighth plague came. After a day and a night of east wind, a prodigious swarm of locusts went up over the land of Egypt, covering the face of the whole earth, and darkening the ground. They "did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had spared." But we were told that the hail

smoteeveryherb, and brakeeverytree. What then was left for the locusts to eat? The writer of this narrative had a very short memory, or else a stupendous power of belief.

Again Pharaoh confessed that he had sinned. The locusts were cleared away, and so effectually that "not one remained." But "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart" for the eighth time, and he refused to let the people go. Whereupon Moses brought darkness over the land of Egypt, a thick darkness that might be felt. This thick darkness lasted in Egypt for three days, during which time the people "saw not one another, neither rose any from his place." We presume, therefore, that they all starved for that time. Poor devils! What had they done to be treated thus? All the children of Israel, however, had light in their dwellings. Why then did they not avail themselves of such a fine opportunity to escape? It was a splendid chance, yet they let it slip. Perhaps Moses did not give the word, and they were like a flock of sheep without him. Perhaps they wished to stay and see the rest of the fun. For more was coming, although it was anything but fun to the poor Egyptians.

To them indeed it was an awful tragedy such as we lack words to describe. Moses commanded the Jews to take a male lamb for each household, to kill it, and to daub its blood over the two side-posts and on the upper door-posts of their houses. The flesh they were to eat in the night, roasted, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, as the inauguration of the Passover. The Lord meant to pass through the land in the dark, and slay all the firstborn in Egypt; and lest he should make some mistakes he required the Jews' houses to be marked with blood so that he might distinguish them. We should expect God to dispense with such "aids to memory." What followed must be told in the language of Scripture: "At midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on the throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." The reader's imagination will picture the horror of this scene. That "great cry in Egypt" arose from a people who were the first victims of God's hatred of all who stood in the way of his chosen "set of leprous slaves." And in this case the tragedy was the more awful, and the more inexcusably atrocious, because God deliberately planned it. He could easily have softened Pharaoh's heart, but he chose to harden it. He could have brought his people out of Egypt in peace, but he preferred that they should start amidst wailings of agony, and leave behind them a track of blood.

Yet in the tragedy there is a touch of comedy. Those beasts that were first killed by the murrian and afterwards plagued by the boil, at last lose their firstborn by the tenth plague. Besides, there is a touch of the ludicrous in the statement thateveryhouse had one dead. All the firstborn of such a large population could not have been present at that time. Some might have left Egypt for

purposes of trade, and others would certainly have been cut off before by death. The story of the tenth plague, like the other nine, requires to be taken with a very large grain of salt.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians were now anxious to get rid of the Jews. So God's people departed in haste. They took good care, however, not to go empty-handed. They "borrowed" of the Egyptians, without the remotest intention of ever paying them back, jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment. In fact they "spoiled the Egyptians." In recent times the modern Egyptians have wiped off that old score by spoiling a few Jewish moneylenders, and so returned tit for tat.

God led his people past instead of through the land of the Philistines, lest they should be frightened by war, and wish to return to Egypt. He does not seem to have known their character. Considering the delight with which they subsequently warred against their enemies, and the joy they took in wholesale massacre, we are inclined to think that they would have just liked to get their hands into the business of fighting by trying conclusions with the Philistines. Moses carried off the bones of Joseph, which must have been rather stale by that time. And God went before the huge host of six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children, and a mixed multitude of followers; by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, until at length they found themselves encamped before the Red Sea.

In the meanwhile God had again hardened Pharaoh's heart, for the express purpose of killing some more Egyptians and getting more honor to himself. The Israelites soon heard that Pharaoh was pursuing them with an army, and they remembered his dreadful war chariots. They found themselves literally between the devil and the deep sea. Whereupon they murmured against Moses for bringing them out into the wilderness to die. But he, disregarding them, stretched forth his miraculous rod over the sea, and lo! the waters parted, forming a wall on either side of a safe passage, through which the Jews travelled with dry feet. Pharaoh and his host, however, attempting the same feat, were overwhelmed by the down-rushing sea-ramparts, and all drowned. There remained, saysExodus, not so much as one of them.

We have heard a different account of this affair. A negro preacher once explained that the Red Sea, just at that time, was "a little bit frozen over," and the Jews, carrying only what they had borrowed "frum the Gyptians," crossed the ice safely; but when Pharaoh came with his thundering war-chariots, the ice broke, and "dey all was drown'd." But a nigger in the audience objected that the Red Sea is "in de quator," and is never frozen over. "War did you larn dat?" asked the preacher. "In de jografy," was the reply. "Ah," was the ready retort, "dat's war you made de mistake; dis was a very long time ago, and dere was no jografy and no quator den." That nigger preacher's explanation seems quite as good as the one given by "Moses."

We leave the Jews with their Lord God on the safe side of the Red Sea, where Moses heads the men in singing a joyful song of praise, and Miriam the prophetess heads the women with timbrel and with dance. Jehovah has ended his plaguing of the Egyptians, after more than decimating them. He has covered his name with terrible splendour, and proved "that there is none like him" to a world which is very happy to be assured of the fact. Two such monsters would make earth a hell. Reader! did you ever meet with a more extraordinary story than this of the Ten Plagues? and can you regard the book which contains it as God's Word?

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—6.

By G. W. FOOTE.

We have often wondered whether Shakespeare had the story of Jonah in his mind when he wrote that brief dialogue between Hamlet and Polonius, which immediately precedes the famous closet-scene in the Master's greatest play—

Hamlet.—Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?Polonius.—By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.Hamlet.—Methinks it is like a weasel.Polonius.—It is backed like a weasel.Hamlet.—Or like a whale?Polonius.—Very like a whale.

Having, however, no means whereby to decide this question, we must content ourselves with broaching it, and leave the reader to form his own conclusion. Yet we cannot refrain from expressing our opinion that the story of the strange adventures of the prophet Jonah is "very like a whale."

In another of Shakespeare's plays, namely "The Tempest," we find a phrase which exactly applies to the romance of Jonah. When Trinculo discovers Caliban lying on the ground, he proceeds to investigate the monster. "What," quoth he, "have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell." Now that is a most admirable description of the Book of Jonah. It has "a very ancient and fish-like smell." In fact, it is about the fishiest of all the fishy stories ever told.

Sailors' "yarns" have become proverbial for their audacious and delicious disregard of truth, and the Book of Jonah is "briny" from beginning to end. It contains only forty-eight verses, but its brevity is no defect. On the contrary, that is one of its greatest charms. The mind takes in the whole story at once, and enjoys it undiluted; as it were a goblet of the fine generous wine of

romance. Varying the expression, the Book of Jonah may be called the perfect cameo of Bible fiction.

When the Book of Jonah was written no one precisely knows, nor is it discoverable who wrote it. According to Matthew Arnold some unknown man of genius gave to Christendom the fourth gospel, and with sublime self-abnegation allowed his name to perish. A similar remark must be made concerning the unknown author who gave to the world this racy story of Jonah and the whale. We heartily wish his name had been preserved for remembrance and praise.

Our marginal Bibles date the Book of Jonah b.c. cir. 862. Other authorities give, the more recent date of b.c. 880 as that of the events recorded in it. This chronology will suggest an important reflection later on.

The wonderful story of Jonah and the whale begins in this wise:—"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

Who Amittai was, and whether man or woman, is a problem still unsolved; but it is reasonable to suppose the name was that of Jonah's father, as the ancient Jews paid no superfluous attentions to women, and generally traced descent from the paternal stem alone. Amittai belonged to a place called Gathhepher, "the village of the Cow's tail," or, as otherwise interpreted, "the Heifer's trough." Jonah's tomb is said to have been long shown on a rocky hill near the town; but whether the old gentleman was ever buried there no man can say. According to Mr. Bradlaugh, the word Jonah means a dove, and is by some derived from an Arabic root, signifying to be weak or gentle. Another interpretation, by Gesenius, is a feeble, gentle bird. This refractory prophet was singularly ill-named. If his cognomen was bestowed on him by his parents, they must have been greatly deceived as to his character. The proverb says that it is a wise son that knows his own father; and with the history of Jonah before us, we may add that it is a wise father who rightly knows his own son.

The solicitude of "the Lord God of the Hebrews" for the welfare of the Ninevites is to the sceptical mind an extraordinary phenomenon. It is one of the very few cases in which he shows the slightest concern for any other people than the Jews. His ordinary practice was to slaughter them wholesale by pestilence or the sword; and it is therefore very refreshing to meet with such an instance of his merciful care. For once he remembers that the rest of Adam's posterity are his children, and possess a claim on his attention.

Jonah, however, did not share this benign sentiment; and disrelishing the missionary enterprise assigned him, he "rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." Jehovah does not seem to have been omnipresent then; that attribute attaches to him only since the beginning of the Christian era, when he assumed universal sway. Long before the time of Jonah, another man, the first ever born in this world, namely Cain, also "went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod;" probably so called because the Lord was not quite awake in that locality. No one knows were Nod was situated, nor can the most learned archaeologists denote the actual position of Tarshish. These two places would be well worth study. A careful examination of them would to some extent reveal what went on in those parts of the world to which God's presence did not extend; and we should be able to compare their geological and other records with those of the rest of the world. No doubt some striking differences would be perceptible.

Jonah determined to voyage by the Joppa and Tarshish line. So he went to the former port and embarked in one of the Company's ships, after paying his fare like a man.

Having a perfectly untroubled conscience, and no apprehension of his coming troubles, Jonah no doubt felt highly elated at having done the Lord so neatly. Perhaps it was this elation of spirits which safe-guarded him from sea-sickness. At any rate he went "down into the sides of the ship," and there slept the sleep of the just. So profound was his slumber, that it was "quite unbroken" by the horrible tempest that ensued. The Lord had his eye on Jonah, for the prophet had not yet reached the safe refuge of Tarshish; and he "sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was likely to be broken." The mariners "cast forth the wares that were in the ship" to lighten her, and toiled hard to keep afloat; but their efforts were apparently fruitless, and nothing lay before them but the certain prospect of a watery grave. The reader will be able to imagine the tumult of the scene; the dash of ravening waves, the fierce howling of the wind, the creaking of masts and the straining of cordage, the rolling and pitching of the good ship and the shifting of her cargo, the captain's hoarse shouts of command and the sailors' loud replies, alternated with frenzied appeals to their gods for help. Yet amidst all the uproar Jonah still slept, as though the vessel were gaily skimming the waters before a pleasant breeze.

Let us pause here to interpose a question. Did the "great wind sent out into the sea" by the Lord confine its attentions to the immediate vicinity of Jonah's ship, or did it cause a general tempest and perhaps send some other vessels to Davy Jones's locker? As no restrictions are mentioned, we presume that the tempest was general, and that the Lord's wind, like the Lord's rain referred to by Jesus, fell alike upon the just and the unjust. This circumstance very naturally heightens our previous conception of his righteousness.

That the Lord, or some other supernatural power, caused the tempest, the mariners of Jonah's ship and their captain never once doubted. Living as they did, and as we do not, under a miraculous dispensation, they attributed every unusual, and especially every unpleasant, occurrence to the agency of a god. The idea of predicting storms, with which the civilised world is now familiar, they would doubtless have regarded as blasphemous and absurd. It is, therefore, by no means wonderful that every man on board (except Jonah, who was fast asleep) "called unto his god." Ignorant of what god was afflicting them, they appealed impartially all round, in the hope of hitting the right one. But the circle of their deities did not include the one which sent the wind; so the tempest continued to prevail, despite their prayers.

In this extremity a happy thought occurred to the "ship-master." It struck him that the strange passenger down below might know something about the tempest, and that his god might have caused it. Forthwith there dawned within him a recollection of words which Jonah had uttered on embarking. Had he not told them "that he fled from the presence of the Lord?" "Dear me," the captain probably said to himself, "what a fool I was not to think of this before. That chap down below is the occasion of all these troubles; I'll go and hunt him up, confound him!" Thereupon he doubtless slapped his thigh, as is the wont of sailors when they solve a difficulty or hit on a brilliant idea; after which he descended "into the sides of the ship," whither Jonah had gone. There he found the prophet slumbering as peacefully as a weanling child, with a smile of satisfaction playing over his Hebrew features. We can imagine the captain's profound disgust in presence of this scene. He and his men had been toiling and praying, and, alas! pitching the cargo overboard, in order to save their skins; and all the while the occasion of their trouble had been lying fast asleep! Preserving an outward decorum, however, he accosted Jonah in very mild terms. "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" said he, "Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

What exquisite simplicity! It reminds us of the childlike and bland Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, when he opposed Mr. Brad-laugh's entry to the House of Commons. That honorable champion of Almighty God objected to Mr. Bradlaugh on the ground that he acknowledged no God, and was thus vastly different from the other members of the House, all of whom "believed in some kind of deity or other." You must have a god to be a legislator, it seems, even if that god is, as the Americans say, only a little tin Jesus. So the captain of this tempest-tost ship desired Jonah to call upon his god. He made no inquiry into the character of the god, any more than did Sir Henry Drummond Wolff on a later occasion. It was enough to know that Jonah had "some kind of deity or other." Any god would do.

Now comes the most remarkable episode in this wonderful story. The captain and the crew were aware that Jonah had "fled from the presence of the Lord," because he had told them; they

had, therefore, every reason to believe that Jonah's god had caused the tempest. Yet, curiously enough, instead of at once proceeding on this belief, they said, everyone to his fellow, "Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us." This wholly superfluous procedure may, perhaps, be attributed to their exceptional love of justice. They wished to make assurance doubly sure before they "went for" Jonah. And with sweet simplicity they had recourse to the casting of lots, in which their wills would be inoperative, and the whole responsibility of deciding be thrown on the gods, who alone possessed the requisite information.

The lot of course fell upon Jonah. Any other result would have spoiled the story. "Then," continues our narrative, "said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought and was tempestuous. And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

We are almost dumb with astonishment before this act of self-sacrifice on the part of Jonah, for which his previous history left us quite unprepared. Who would have thought him capable of such disinterested conduct? His self-abnegation was assuredly heroic, and may even be called sublime. No doubt the captain and crew of the ship were as much astonished as we are, and their opinion of Jonah went up several hundred per cent. They resolved to make a last supreme effort before turning him into a fish-bait. But all their gallant endeavors were discovered to be futile and a mere waste of time. So the men, more in sorrow than in anger, finally took Jonah up and threw him overboard. They had done their best for him, and now, finding that they could do no more except at too great a risk, they sadly left him to do the rest for himself.

Immediately, we are told, "the sea ceased from her raging." Jonah was oil upon the troubled waters. What an invaluable recipe does this furnish us against the dangers of the deep sea! The surest method of allaying a storm is to throw a prophet overboard. Every ship should carry a missionary in case of need. It would, indeed, be well if the law made this compulsory. The cost of maintaining the missionary would be more than covered by the saving effected in insurance. Here is a splendid field for Christian self-sacrifice! Hundreds of gentlemen who are now engaged in very doubtful labor among the heathen, might engage in this new enterprise with the absolute certainty of a beneficent result; for poor ungodly mariners would thus be spared a hasty

dispatch from this world without time to repent and obtain forgiveness, and be allowed ample leisure to secure salvation.

When the men saw that "the sea ceased from her raging" on Jonah's being cast into her depths, "they feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows." To the sceptical mind it would seem that they had much more reason to "fear" the Lord during the continuance of the tempest than after it had subsided. It also seems strange that they should have the means wherewith to offer a sacrifice. Perhaps they had a billy-goat on board, and made him do duty, in default of anything better. Or failing even a billy-goat, as the Lord God of the Hebrews could only be propitiated by the shedding of blood, they perhaps caught and immolated a stray rat. The nature of their "vows" is not recorded, but it is not unreasonable to assume that they swore never again to take on board a passenger fleeing "from the presence of the Lord."

Meanwhile, what had become of poor Jonah? Most men would be effectually settled if thrown overboard in a storm. But there are some people who were not born to be drowned, and Jonah was one of them. He was destined to another fate. The Lord, it appears, "had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah," and the feat was of course duly performed. Our narrative does not describe the character of this "great fish," but light is cast on the subject by another passage of Scripture. In the twelfth chapter of St. Matthew, and the fortieth verse, Jesus is represented as saying, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The great fish was then a whale. Jesus said so, and there can be no higher authority. Sharks and such ravenous fish have an unpleasant habit of "chawing" their victims pretty considerably before swallowing them; so, on the whole, we prefer to believe that it was a whale. Yet the Levant is a curious place for a whale to be lurking in. The creature must have been miraculously led there to go through its appointed performance. It must also have been "prepared," to use the language of the Bible, in a very remarkable way, for the gullet of a whale is not large enough to allow of the passage of an object exceeding the size of an ordinary herring. Swallowing Jonah must have been a tough job after the utmost preparation. With a frightfully distended throat, however, the whale did its best, and by dint of hard striving at last got Jonah down.

Having properly taken Jonah in out of the wet, the poor whale doubtless surmised that its troubles had ended. But alas they had only just begun! Swallowing a prophet is one thing; digesting him is another. For three days and three nights the whale struggled desperately to digest Jonah, and for three days and nights Jonah obstinately refused tobedigested. Never in the entire course of its life had it experienced such a difficulty. During the whole of that period, too, Jonah carried on a kind of prayer meeting, and the strange rumbling in its belly must have

greatly added to the poor animal's discomfort At last it grew heartily sick of Jonah, and vomited him up on dry land. We have no doubt that it swam away into deep waters, a sadder but wiser whale; and that ever afterwards, instead of bolting its food, it narrowly scrutinised every morsel before swallowing it, to make sure it wasn't another prophet. According to its experience, prophets were decidedly the most unprofitable articles of consumption.

We are of course aware that the narrative states that "the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited Jonah upon the dry land." But this we conceive to be a mere pleasantry on the part of the unknown author. The idea of the Lord whispering into a whale's ear is ineffably ludicrous: besides, the whale had a very natural inclination to rid itself of Jonah, and needed no divine prompting.

Jonah's prayer "unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly" is very amusing. There is not a sentence in it which bears any reference to the prophet's circumstances. It is a kind of Psalm, after the manner of those ascribed to David. Our belief is that the author found it floating about, and thinking it would do for Jonah, inserted it in his narrative, without even taking the trouble to furbish it into decent keeping with the situation.

The word of the Lord came unto Jonah a second time, and presuming no more to disobey, he went to Nineveh. It is to be supposed, however, that he first well-lined his poor stomach, for both he and the whale had fasted for three days and nights, and must have been sadly in want of victuals.

Nineveh, according to our author, was a stupendous city of "three days' journey." This means its diameter and not its circumference, for we are told that Jonah "entered into the city a day's journey." If we allow twenty miles as a moderate days' walk, Nineveh was sixty miles through from wall to wall, or about twenty times as large as London; and if densely populated like our metropolis, it must have contained more than eighty million inhabitants. This is too great a stretch even for a sailor's yarn. Our author did not take pains to clear his narrative of discrepancy. In his last verse he informs us that the city contained "more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left." If this number is correct Nineveh was a large place, but its dimensions were very much less than those stated in the Book of Jonah.

Jonah obeyed the Lord this time and began to preach. "Yet forty days," cried he, "and Nineveh shall be overthrown." How the prophet made himself understood is an open question! Either the Lord taught him their language, or he miraculously enabled them to understand Hebrew. Further, they worshipped Baal, and Jonah preached to them in the name of his foreign God. According to

ancient, and to a large extent modern custom, we should expect them in such a case to kill the presumptuous prophet, or at least to shut him up as a madman. Yet they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, "the people of Nineveh believed God." Even the king was converted. He covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He also decreed that neither man nor beast in the city should eat or drink anything; but, said he, "let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way." What an enormous consumption of sackcloth there must have been! The merchants who sold it did a surprising business, and no doubt quotations went up immensely. We wonder, indeed, how they managed to supply such a sudden and universal demand. And what a sight was presented by the whole population of the city! Men, women, and children, high and low, rich and poor, were all arrayed in the same dingy garments. Even the horses, cows, pigs and sheep, were similarly attired. What a queer figure they must have cut! And what an astonishing chorus of prayer ascended to heaven! According to the text, the beasts had to "cry mightily" as well as the men. Since the confusion of tongues at Babel, neither history nor tradition records such a frightful hubbub.

Their supplications prevailed. God "saw their works, that they had turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." Immutable God changes his mind, infallible God repents!

God spared Nineveh, but only for a brief while, for it was destroyed a few years later by Arbaces, the Mede. The merciful respite was thus not of long continuance. Yet it "displeased Jonah exceedingly." He had been suspicious from the first, and he only fulfilled God's mission under constraint. And now his worst suspicions were confirmed. After he had told the Ninevites that their city would be overthrown in forty days, God had relented, and utterly ruined Jonah's reputation as a prophet. So he made himself a booth outside the city, and sat in its shadow, to watch what would happen, with a deep feeling, which he plainly expressed to the Almighty, that now his reputation was gone he might as well die. The Lord considerately "prepared a gourd," which grew up over Jonah's head to protect him from the heat; at which the sulky prophet was "exceedingly glad," although it would naturally be thought that the booth would afford ample protection. He, however, soon found himself sold; for the Lord prepared a worm to destroy the gourd, and when the sun arose he sent "a vehement east wind" which beat upon poor Jonah's head, and made him so faint that he once more asked God to despatch him out of his misery. Whereupon the Lord said coaxingly, "Doest thou well to be angry?" And Jonah pettishly answered, "Yes, I do." Then the Lord, with a wonderful access of pathos, altogether foreign to his general character, twitted Jonah with having pity for the gourd and none for the inhabitants of "that great city." With this the story concludes. We are unable to say whether the poor prophet, so wretchedly sold, ever recovered from his spleen, or whether it shortened his days and brought him to an untimely grave.

The Book of Jonah is as true as Gospel, for Jesus endorsed it. The Bible contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So without expressing any sceptical sentiments, we will end by repeating Byron's words, "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction."

THE WANDERING JEWS.

BIBLE ROMANCES.-VII.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Middle Ages had a legend of the Wandering Jew. This person was supposed to have been doomed, for the crime of mocking Jesus at the crucifixion, to wander over the earth until his second coming. No one believes this now. The true Wandering Jews were those slaves whom Jehovah rescued from Egyptian bondage, with a promise that he would lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey, but whom he compelled to roam the deserts instead for forty years, until all of them except two had perished. Of all the multitude who escaped from Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb entered the promised land. Even Moses had to die in sight of it.

These poor Wandering Jews demand our pity. They were guilty of many crimes against humanity, but they scarcely deserved such treatment as they received. Their God was worse than they. He was quick-tempered, unreasonable, cruel, revengeful, and dishonest. Few of his promises to them were performed. They worshipped a bankrupt deity. The land of promise was a Tantalus cup ever held to their lips, and ever mocking them when they essayed to drink. God was their greatest enemy instead of their best friend. Their tortuous path across the wilderness was marked by a track of bleaching bones. All the evils which imagination can conceive fell on their devoted heads. Bitten by serpents, visited by plagues, cursed with famine and drought, swallowed by earthquake, slain by war, and robbed by priests, they found Jehovah a harder despot than Pharaoh. Death was to them a happy release, and only the grave a shelter from the savagery of God.

Commentators explain that the Jews who left Egypt were unfit for the promised land. If so, they were unfit to be the chosen people of God. Why were they not allowed to remain in Egypt until they grew better, or why was not some other nation selected to inherit Canaan?

At the end of our number on "The Ten Plagues" we left the Jews on the safe side of the Red Sea. We must now ask a few questions which we had no space for then.

How, in a period of two hundred and fifteen years, did the seventy males of Jacob's house multiply into a nation of over two millions? Experience does not warrant belief in such a rapid increase. The Jewish chroniclers were fond of drawing the long bow. In the book of Judges, for instance, we are told that the Gileadites, under, Jephthah, slew 42,000 Ephriamites; and that the Benjamites slew 40,000 Israelites, after which the Israelites killed 43,000 Benjamites, all of these being "men of valor" that "drew the sword." The book of Samuel says that the Philistines had 30,000 war chariots, and that they slew 30,000 footmen of Israel. The second book of Chronicles says that Pekah, king of Israel, slew of Judah in one day 120,000 "sons of valor," and carried away 200,000 captives; that Abijah's force consisted of 400,000, and Jeroboam's of 800,000, 500,000 of whom were killed! At the battle of Waterloo the total number of men killed on our side was 4,172. The statistics of slaughter in the Bible were clearly developed from the inner consciousness of the Jewish scribes; and no doubt the same holds good with respect to the statistics of the flight from Egypt.

This view is corroborated by a singular statement in the third chapter of Numbers. We are there informed that when the census was taken "All the first-born males, from a month old and upwards of those that were numbered, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and three score and thirteen." Now as there were about 900,000 males altogether, it follows that every Jewish mother must have had on an averageforty-two sons, to say nothing of daughters! Such extraordinary fecundity is unknown to the rest of the world, except in the reign of romance. The Jews bragged a great deal about Jehovah, and they appear to have obtained some compensation by bragging a great deal about themselves.

How did the Jews manage to quit Egypt in one night? There were 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children, not to mention "the mixed multitude that went up also with them." The entire population must have numbered more than two millions, and some commentators estimate it at nearly three. They had to come in from all parts of Goshen to Rameses, bringing with them the sick and infirm, the very old and the very young. Among such a large population there could not have been less than two hundred births a day. Many of the Jewish women, therefore, must have been just confined. How could they and their new-born children have started off in such a summary manner? Many more women must have been at the point of confinement How could these have been hurried off at all? Yet we are told that not a single person was left behind.

How were the flocks and herds driven out in such haste? There were about two million sheep and two hundred thousand oxen. The sheep alone would have required grazing-land as extensive as the whole county of Bedford, besides what would have been needed for the oxen.

Is it credible that all these animals were collected together from such a wide area, and driven out of Egypt in one night? Yet we are told that not a single hoof was left behind!

How did the huge multitude of people march? If they travelled fifty men abreast, as is supposed to have been the practice in the Hebrew armies, the able-bodied warriors alone would have filled up the road for aboutseven miles, and the whole multitude would have formed a dense columntwenty-two miles long. The front rank would have been two days' journey in advance of the rear.

How did the sheep and cattle march? How was it possible for them to keep pace with their human fellow-travellers? They would naturally not march in a compact array, and the vast drove must therefore have spread widely and lengthened out for miles.

What did the drove live upon during the journey from Barneses to Succoth, and from Succoth to Etham, and from Etham to the Red Sea? Such grass as there was, even if the sheep and cattle went before the men, women, and children, could not have been of much avail; for what was not eaten by the front ranks must have been trodden under foot at once, and rendered useless to those that followed. After they "encamped by the Red Sea," on the third day, there was no vegetation at all. The journey was over a desert, the surface of which was composed of hard gravel intermixed with pebbles. After crossing the Red Sea, their road lay over a desert region, covered with sand, gravel, and stone, for about nine miles; after which they entered a boundless desert plain, calledEl Atiwhite and painfully glaring to the eye; and beyond this the ground was broken by sand-hills. How were the two million sheep and two hundred thousand oxen provisioned during this journey?

What did the Jews themselves live on? The desert afforded them no sustenance until God miraculously sent manna. They must, therefore, have taken a month's provisions for every man, woman, and child. How could they possibly have provided themselves with so much food on so short a notice? And how could they have carried it, seeing that they were already burdened with kneading-troughs and other necessaries for domestic use, besides the treasures they "borrowed" of the Egyptians.

How did they provide themselves with tents? Allowing ten persons for each tent, they must have required two hundred thousand. Were these carefully got ready in expectation? In the land of Goshen they lived in houses with "lintels" and "side-posts." And how were the tents carried? The Jews themselves were already well loaded. Of course the oxen remain, but, as Colenso observes, they were not trained to carry t goods on their backs, and were sure to prove refractory under such a burden.

Whence did the Jews obtain their arms? According to Exodus (xiii, 18) "the children of Israel went upharnessedout of the land of Egypt." The Hebrew word which is rendered "harnessed" appears to mean "armed" or "in battle array" in all the other passages where it occurs, and is so translated. Some commentators, scenting a difficulty in this rendering, urge that the true meaning is "by five in a rank." But if 600,000 men marched out of Egypt "five in a rank," they must have formed a column sixty-eight miles long, and it would have taken several days to start them all off, whereas they went out altogether "that self-same day." Besides, the Jews had arms in the desert, and how could they have possessed them there unless they obtained them in Egypt? If they went out of Egypt "armed," why did they cry out "sore afraid" when Pharaoh pursued them?

According to Herodotus, the Egyptian army, which formed a distinct caste, never exceeded 160,000 men. Why were the Jews so appalled by less than a third of their own number? Must we suppose, with Kalisch, that their bondage in Egypt had crushed all valor and manhood out of their breasts? Josephus gives a different explanation. He says that the day after Pharaoh's host was drowned in the Red Sea, "Moses gathered together the weapons of the Egyptians, which were brought to the camp of the Hebrews by the current of the sea and the force of the wind assisting it. And he conjectured that this also happened by Divine Providence, that so they might not be destitute of weapons." But, as Colenso observes, though body-armormighthave been obtained in this way, swords, spears and shieldscould notin any number. The Bible, too, says nothing about such an occurrence. We must therefore assume that 600,000 well-armed Jews were such utter cowards that they could not strike a blow for their wives and children and their own liberty against the smaller army of Pharaoh, but could only whimper and sigh after their old bondage. Yet a month later they fought bravely with the Amalekites, and ever afterwards they were as eager for battle as any Irishman at Donnybrook: fair. How can this difference be accounted for? Could a nation of hereditary cowards become stubborn warriors in the short space of a month?

Let us now follow the Wandering Jews through the Desert, which they should have crossed in a week or two, but which they travelled up and down for forty years. People who want to make an expeditious journey had better do without a divine guide.

Coming to Marah, they found only bitter water to drink, at which they began to murmur. But the Lord showed Moses a certain tree, which when cast into the water made it sweet. It must have been a wonderful tree to sweeten water for two millions of people. Bitter water, also, quenches thirst more readily than sweet, and it stimulates the appetite, which would be highly desirable under a fierce relaxing sun.

A month after they left Egypt they came to the wilderness of Sin. There they began to murmur again. Finding themselves without food, they remembered "the flesh pots" of Egypt, and reproached Moses with having brought them into the desert to die of hunger. Both Moses and the Lord seem to have thought it unreasonable on their part to ask for something to eat. Oliver Twist was stared at when he asked for more, but the Jews surprised God by asking for something to begin with. Yet reflecting, perhaps, that they were after all unable to live without food, the Lord rained down manna from heaven. After the dew evaporated in the morning, they found this heavenly diet lying on the ground. It was "like a coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." No doubt the angels subsist on it in paradise. Moses preserved a pot of it for the instruction of future generations. The pot has, however, not been discovered up to the present day. Some future explorers may light upon it "in the fulness of time," and so-help to prove the historical character of the Pentateuch.

The manna, as might be expected, had some peculiarities. No matter how much or how little he gathered, every man found on measuring that he had exactly an omer of it. Although it fell regularly every week day, none fell on Sunday. A double quantity had, therefore, to be gathered on Saturday. It melted in the sun, but could nevertheless be baked and seethed. Any of it left overnight stank in the morning and bred worms.

For forty years "the children of Israel did eat manna." But more than once their gorge rose against it. Manna for breakfast, manna for lunch, manna for dinner, manna for tea, and manna for supper, was a little more than they could stand, The monotony of their diet became intolerable. Accordingly, we read in the twenty-first chapter ofNumbers, that they complained of it and asked for a slight change in the bill of fare. "There is no bread," said they, "neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light food." This small request so incensed the Lord that he sent a lot of fiery serpents among them, which bit them so that "much people of Israel died." Like Oliver Twist, the Jews quickly repented their presumption. They humbled themselves before Moses, and he interceded with God for them. The prophet then made a brass serpent and set it on a pole, and on looking at it all who had been bitten recovered.

On another occasion, as we read in the eleventh ofNumbers, they were guilty of a similar offence. This time it was the more surprising, as God had just burnt a lot of them up with raging fire for 'complaining.' They remembered "the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." "Now," said they, "there is nothing at all, besides this manna, before our eyes-Who shall give us flesh to eat?" The Egyptian bill of fare was certainly enough to make their mouths water, and it proves that if Pharaoh made them work hard he did not starve them, as Jehovah very nearly succeeded in doing. They were so affected by their recollection of the luscious victuals they enjoyed in Egypt,

that they actually cried with sorrow at their loss. Moses heard them weeping, "every man in the door of his tent." This put the Lord in a very bad temper; and Moses, who seems to have been much less irascible than Jehovah, "also was displeased." God determined to give them a surfeit. "Ye shall," said he, "not eat flesh one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and be loathsome unto you." Thereupon the Lord sent a wind which brought quails from the sea. They were so plentiful that they fell in heaps two cubits high for about twenty miles around the camp. That worthy commentator, the Rev. Alexander Cruden, says that the miracle of this occurrence consisted, not in the great number of quails, but in their being "brought so seasonably" to the Jewish camp. The quantity did not trouble his credulous mind. "Some authors," says he, "affirm that in those eastern and southern countries, quails are innumerable, so that in one part of Italy within the compass of five miles, there were taken about an hundred thousand of them every day for a month together; and that sometimes they fly so thick over the sea, that being weary they fall into ships, sometimes in such numbers, that they sink them with their weight." The good man's easy reliance on 'some authors.' and his ready acceptance of such fables, show what credulity is engendered by belief in the Bible.

The Jews gathered quails for two days and a night, and joyfully carried them home. But "while the flesh was yet between their teeth," the Lord smote them with a very great plague, so that multitudes of them died. Poor devils! They were always in hot water.

How the sheep and cattle were provisioned the Bible does not inform us. There was scarcely a nibble of grass to be had in the desert, and as they could not very well have lived on sand and pebbles, they must have been supported miraculously. Perhaps the authors of the Pentateuch forgot all about this.

Not only were the Jews, like their flocks and herds, miraculously supported; they were also miraculously found in clothes. For forty years their garments and shoes did not wear out. How was this miracle wrought? When matter rubs against matter, particles are lost by abrasion. Did the Lord stop this process, or did he collect all the particles that were worn off during the day and replace them by night, on the soles of shoes, on the elbows of coats, and on the knees of pantaloons? If the clothes never wore out, it is fair to suppose that they remained absolutely unchanged. Imagine a toddling urchin, two years old at the exodus from Egypt, wearing the same rig when he grew up to manhood! Justin, however, says that the clothes grew with their growth. Some Jewish rabbis hold that angels acted as tailors in the wilderness, and so the garments were all kept straight. But Augustine, Chrysostom, and other Fathers abide by the literal interpretation that, through the blessing of God, the clothes and shoes never wore out, so that those who grew to manhood were able to hand them over, as good as new, to the rising

generation. According to this theory,everybodymust have had a poor fit, unless there was a transference of garments every twelve months or so.

The history of the Wandering Jews is full of miracles and wonders. It says that all the congregation of Israel, numbering over two millions, assembled at the door of the Tabernacle. As the whole width of the Tabernacle was eighteen feet, only nine men could have stood in front of it; and therefore the warriors of Israel alone, to say nothing of the rest of the population, if we allow eighteen inches between each rank of nine men, would have formed a column nearlytwenty mileslong! We find also that Moses, and Joshua after him, addressed not only the whole congregation of Israel, including men, women, and children, but the "mixed multitude" of strangers as well. Their voices were distinctly heard by a crowded mass of people as large as the entire population of London. They must have had stentorian lungs, or the people must have had a wonderful sense of hearing.

When the Jews were encamped, according to Scott's estimate, they lived in a sort of "moveable city,twelve miles square," nearly as large as London. The people had to go outside this vast camp every day to bring in a supply of water and fuel, after cutting the latter down where they could find it! All their rubbish had to be carried out in like manner, for Jehovah used sometimes to take a walk among them, and he was highly displeased at seeing dirt. Every man, woman, and child, including the old, the sick, and the infirm, had to go outside the camp to attend to the necessities of nature! All the refuse of their multitudinous. sacrifices had to be lugged out of the camp by the three priests, Aaron, Eleazer, and Itharnar. Colenso reckons that the sacrifices alone, allowing less than three minutes for each, would have occupied them incessantly during the whole twenty-four hours of every day. The pigeons brought to them daily as sin offer-ings must have numbered about 264, and as these had to be consumed by the three priests, each of them had to eat 88 pigeons a day, besides heaps of roast beef and other victuals!

Soon after the first fall of manna, the Jews murmured again because they had no water. Whereupon Moses smote a rock with his magical rod, and water gushed from it. The precious fluid came just in time to refresh them for their fight with the Amalekites. These people were very obstinate foes, and it required a miracle to defeat them. Moses ascended a hill and held up his hand. While he did so the Israelites prevailed, but when he let down his hand the Amalekites prevailed. To ensure victory, Aaron and Hur stood on either side of him, and held up his hands until the sun set. By this means Joshua discomfited the Amalekites with great slaughter. Moses built an altar to celebrate the event, and God swore that he would "have war with Amelek from generation to generation." As Jehovah's vengeance was so lasting, it is no wonder that his worshipers carried on their wars ever afterwards on the most hellish principles.

In the thirty-first chapter of Numbers we read that 12,000 Israelites warred against Midian. The brag of the chronicler is evident in this number or in those which follow. This little army polished off all the kings of Midian, burnt all their cities and castles, slew 48,000 men, and carried off 100,000 captives, besides, 675,000 sheep, 72,000 oxen, and 61,000 asses. What prodigious spoil there was in those days! Of the captives Moses ordered 48,000 women and 20,000 boys to be massacred in cold blood; while the remaining 32,000 "women that had not known man by lying with him" were reserved for another fate. The Lord's share of these was thirty-two! They were of course handed over to the priests as his representatives. Parsons, who rail against the immorality of scepticism, say that this is all true.

These Midianites were a tough lot; for although they wereall killedon this occasion, and their cities and castles burnt, we find them a powerful nation again in the sixth ofJudges, and able to prevail against the Jews for seven years.

Another people badly punished by the Jews were the inhabitants of Bashan. All their cities were destroyed to the number of sixty. Their king, Og, was a gigantic fellow, and slept on an iron bed twelve feet long. The cities of Heshbon were destroyed in the same way. All the men, women, and children, were slaughtered. Not one was spared.

We shall hereafter follow the Jews under Joshua. For the present we must content ourselves with a last reference to their wanderings under Moses. While they were encamped round Mount Sinai, their leader received an invitation to go up and visit God who had been staying there for six days. They had much to talk about, and the interview lasted forty days and forty nights. At the end of it Moses descended, carrying with him the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God on two tables of stone. In his absence the Wandering Jews had given him up as lost, and had induced Aaron to make them a god, in the shape of a golden calf, to go before them. This image they were worshipping as Moses approached the camp, and his anger waxed so not that he threw down the tables and broke all the Ten Commandments at once. He then burnt the calf in fire and ground it to powder, mixed it with water and made them drink it. He also sent the Levites among them, who put three thousand men to the edge of the sword. God wanted to destroy them altogether, but Moses held him back. "Let me alone," said the Lord. "No, no," said Moses, "just think what the Egyptians will say; they'll laugh at you after all as a poor sort of a god; and remember, too, that you are bound by an oath to multiply your people and to let them inherit the land of promise." So the Lord cooled down, and wrote out the Decalogue again on two fresh tables of stone. This Decalogue is supposed to be the foundation of morality. But long before the time of Moses moral laws were known and observed in Egypt, in India, and among all the peoples that ever lived. Moral laws are the permanent conditions of social health, and the fundamental ones must be observed wherever any form of society exists. Their ground and

guarantee are to be found in human nature, and do not depend on a fabulous episode in the history of the Wandering Jews.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—VIII.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Bible, it is frequently asserted, was never meant to teach us science, but to instruct us in religion and morality; and therefore we must not look to it for a faithful account of what happened in the external world, but only for a record of the inner experiences of mankind. Astronomy will inform us how the heavenly bodies came into existence, and by what laws their motions are governed; Geology will acquaint us with the way in which the earth's crust was formed, and with the length of time occupied by the various stages of the process; and Biology will tell us all about the origin and development of living things. God has given us reason, by exercising which we may gather knowledge and establish sciences, so as to explain the past, illustrate the present, and predict the future; and as reason is sufficient for all this, there is no need of a divine revelation in such matters. But as reason is insufficient to teach the will of God and the laws of morality, a divine revelation of these is necessary, and the Bible contains it.

This plausible contention cannot, however, be maintained. The Bible is not silent with respect to astronomy, geology, or biology. It makes frequent and precise statements concerning them, and in nearly every instance it contradicts scientific truth as we have amply proved in previous numbers of this series.

The eleventh chapter of Genesis gives an explanation of the diversity of languages on the earth. It does this in the truest spirit of romance. Philologists like Max Müller and Whitney must regard the story of the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of tongues, as a capital joke. A great many parsons may still believe it, but they are not expected to know much.

One fact alone is enough to put the philology of Genesis out of court. The native languages of America are all closely related to each other, but they have no affinity with any language of the Old World. It is therefore clear that they could not have been imported into the New World by emigrants from the plains of Central Asia. The Genesaic theory is thus proved to be not of universal application, and consequently invalid.

Let us come to the Bible story. Some time after the Flood, and before the birth of Abraham, "the whole earth was of one language and one speech;" or, as Colenso translates the original, "of one lip, and of one language." This primitive tongue must have been Hebrew. God spoke it in Eden when he conversed with our first parents, and probably it is spoken in heaven to this day. For all we know it may be spoken in hell too. It probably is, for the Devil and his angels lived in heaven before they were turned into hell, and we may conclude that they took their native language with them. It was spoken by Adam when he named his wife in Paradise; by Eve, after the expulsion when she gave names to her sons, Cain and Seth; by Lamech, shortly before the Flood, when he explained the name of Noah; and indeed, as Colenso observes, "it is obvious that the names of the whole series of Patriarchs from Adam to Noah, and from Noah onwards, are in almost every instance pure Hebrew names." Delitzsch, however, thinks it comparatively more probable that the Syriac or Nabataan tongue, preserved after the dispersion at Babylon, was the one originally spoken. Yet he dismisses the possibility of demonstrating it. He supposes that the names of Adam and the other patriarchs have been altered, but not so as to lose any of their original meaning; in other words, that they have been, by God's grace, translated with perfect accuracy from the primeval speech. But Colenso very justly remarks that the original documents do not allude to a process of translation, and that we have no right to assume it. He also adds that "if the authority of Scripture is sufficient to prove the fact of a primeval language, it must also prove that this language was Hebrew."

Yet the Bible is wrong, for Hebrew could not have been the primitive speech. It is only a Semitic dialect, a branch of the Semitic stem. Sanscrit is another stem, equally ancient; and according to Max Müller and Bunsen, both are modifications of an earlier and simpler language. Neither has the least affinity with Chinese, which again, like them, differs radically from the native dialects of America. As Hosea Biglow sings,

"John P. Robinson, heSays they didn't know everything down in Judee."

And most certainly they did not know the true origin and development of the various languages spoken by the nations of the earth.

The people who dwelt on the earth after the Deluge, and all spoke one language, journeyed from the east, found a plain in, the land of Shinar, and dwelt there. Shinar is another name for Babylon. After dwelling there no one knows exactly how long, "they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for morter." The writer of this story was very fond of short cuts. It took men a long time to learn the art of making bricks; and the idea of their suddenly saying to each other "let us make brick," and at once proceeding to do so, is a wild absurdity.

Having made a lot of bricks, they naturally wished to do something with them. So "they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." How could making a name, for the information of nobody but themselves, prevent their dispersion? And how could they resolve to build a "city," when they had never seen one, and had no knowledge of what it was like? Cities are not built in this manner. "Rome wasn't built in a day" is a proverb which applies to all other places as well. London, Paris, and Rome, are the growth of centuries, and the same must have been true of ancient capitals.

The reason assigned by Scripture for the work of these primitive builders is plainly inadequate. A more probable reason is that they mistrusted God's promise never again to destroy the earth with a flood, and therefore determined to build a high tower, so that, if another deluge came, they might ascend above the waters, or, if need be step clean into heaven itself. Their lack of faith is not surprising. We find the same characteristic on the part of believers in our own day. They believe in God's promises only so far as it suits their interest and convenience. Scripture says, "Whoso giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord." Yet there are thousands of rich Christians who seem to mistrust the security.

How high did these primitive builders think heaven was? According to Colenso, they said, "Come, let us build for us a city, and a towerwith its head in heaven." Did they really think they would ever succeed in building so high? Perhaps they did, for their Natural Philosophy was extremely limited. They doubtless imagined the blue vault of heaven as a solid thing, in which were stuck the sun, moon, and stars, and no higher than the sailing clouds.

Their simple ignorance is intelligible, but how can we explain the ignorance of God? Their project alarmed him. He actually "came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded." Heaven was too distant for him to see from with accuracy, and telescopes were not then invented. A close inspection led him to believe that his ambitious children would succeed in their enterprise. They thought they might build into heaven, and he thought so too. What was to be done? If they once got into heaven, it might be very difficult to turn them out again. It took several days' hard fighting to expel Satan and the rebellious angels on a previous occasion, and these newcomers might be still more obstinate. In this dangerous extremity, "the Lord said [unto whom is unknown], Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

Why did the Lord resolve to take all this trouble? Had he forgotten the law of gravitation and the principles of architecture? Was he, who made the heaven and the earth, ignorant of the distance between them? He had only to let the people go on building, and they would eventually confound themselves; for, after reaching a certain height, the tower would tumble about their ears. Gravitation would defeat the cohesion of morter Why did not God leave them alone? Why did he take so much unnecessary trouble? The answer is that this "Lord" was only "Jehovah" of the Jews, a tribal god, who naturally knew no more about the facts and laws of science than his worshippers who made him.

The Lord carried out his resolution. He "confounded their language," so that no man could understand his neighbors. Probably this judgment was executed in the night; and when they awoke in the morning, instead of using the old familiar tongue, one man spoke Chinese, another Sanscrit, another Coptic, another American, another Dutch, another Double Dutch, and so on to the end of the chapter.

According to the Bible, this is the true philology. No language on the earth is more than four thousand years old, and every one was miraculously originated at Babel. Is there a single philologist living who believes this? We do not know one.

The result of this confusion of tongues was that the people "left off to build the city," and were "scattered, abroad on the face of all the earth." But why did they disperse? Their common weakness should have kept them together. Society is founded upon our wants. Our necessity, and not our self-sufficience, causes association and mutual helpfulness. Had these people kept company for a short time, they would have understood each other again. A few common words would have come into general use, and the building of the tower might have been resumed.

How was their language "confounded?" Did God destroy their verbal memory? Did he paralyse a part of their brain, so that, although they remembered the words, they could not speak them? Did he affect the organs of articulation, so that the sounds of the primeval language could not be reproduced? Will some theologian kindly explain this mystery? Language is not a gift, but a growth. Different tribes and nations have had different experiences, different wants, and different surroundings, and the result is a difference in their languages, as well as in their religious ideas, political organisations, and social customs.

Before we leave this portion of the subject, we beg to introduce Milton again. In the last Book of "Paradise Lost" he adds from his fertile imagination to the Bible story, and supplies a few deficiencies about which the mind is naturally curious. He makes the Archangel Michael tell poor Adam and Eve, as part of his panoramic description of future times, that a mighty hunter shall

arise, claiming dominion over his fellows, and gather under him a band of adherents. This is clearly Nimrod. Milton separates him and his subjects from the rest of mankind, and represents them as the people who settled on "the plain in the land of Shinar."

According to our great poet, therefore, the confusion of tongues applied only to them, and the other inhabitants of the earth retained the primeval language in all its original purity. This detachment, says Michael—

Marching from Eden towards the west, shall findThe plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge,Boils out from underground, the mouth of Hell:Of brick, and of that stuff they cast to buildA city and a tower, whose top may reach to Heaven;And get themselves a name, lest, far dispersedIn foreign lands, their memory be lost,Regardless whether good or evil fame.But God, who oft descends to visit menUnseen, and through their habitations walksTo mark their doings, them beholding soon,Comes down to see their city, ere the towerObstruct Heav'n-tow'rs, and in derision setsUpon their tongue a various spirit to raseQuite out their native language, and insteadTo sow a jangling noise of words unknown.Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loudAmong the builders; each to other callsNot understood, till hoarse, and all in rage,As mock'd, they storm: great laughter was in Heaven,And looking down, to see the hubbub strangeAnd hear the din; thus was the building leftRidiculous, and the work Confusion named.

If the Tower of Babel was built over the mouth of Hell it would be wise to explore its site and make proper excavations, so as to settle the geography and physical character of the bottomless-pit. The Churches are sadly in want of a little information about hell, and here is an opportunity for them to acquire it, We hope the explorers will all be selected for their extreme piety, so that they may be as fire-proof as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and happily escape cremation.

Because the Lord "did there confound their language" the place was "called Babel." The Hebrew root,balalto confound, is not, however, that from which the word "Babel" is derived, It is a compound of "Bel," and may mean the "House of Bel," "Court of Bel," or "Gate of Bel." Some, including Professor Rawlinson, suppose it be a compound of "El" or "il," in which case "Bab-El" means the "Gate of God."

It is evident that the story of the Tower of Babal was borrowed by the Jehovist author of this part of Genesis from the tradition of the famous unfinished Temple of Belus, one of the wonders of antiquity. "Birs Nimroud" is thus described by Kalisch:—

"The huge heap, in which bricks, stone, marble, and basalt, are irregularly mixed, covers a surface of 49,000 feet; while the chief mound is nearly 300 feet high, and from 200 to 400 feet in width, commanding an extensive view over a country of utter desolation. The Tower consisted of seven distinct stages or square platforms, built of kiln-burnt bricks, each about twenty feet high, gradually diminishing in diameter. The upper part of the brickwork has a vitrefied appearance; for it is supposed that the Babylonians, in order to render their edifices more durable, submitted them to the heat of the furnace; and large fragments of such vitrefied and calcined materials are also intermixed with the rubbish at the base. This circumstance may have given rise to, or at least countenanced, the legend of the destruction of the Tower by heavenly fire, still extensively adopted among the Arabians. The terraces were devoted to the planets, and were differently colored in accordance with the notions of Sabæan astrology—the lowest, Saturn's,black; the second, Jupiter's,orange; the third, Mars,red; the fourth, the Sun's,yellow; the fifth, Venus's,white; the sixth, Mercury's,blue; the seventh, the Moon's,green. Merodach-adan-akhi is stated to have begun it B.C. 1100. It was finished five centuries afterwards by Nebuchadnezzar, who left a part of its history on two cylinders, which have lately been excavated on the spot, and thus deciphered by Rawlinson. 'The building, named the Planisphere, which was the wonder of Babylon, I have made and finished. With bricks, enriched with lapis lazuli, I have exalted its head. Behold now the building, named "The Stages of the Seven Spheres," which was the wonder of Borsippa, had been built by a former king. He had completed forty-two cubits of height: but he did not finish the head. From the lapse of time it became ruined. They had not taken care of the exit of the waters; so the rain and wet had penetrated into the brickwork. The casing of burnt brick lay scattered in heaps. Then Merodach, my great lord, inclined my heart to repair the building. I did not change its site, nor did I destroy its foundation-platform. But, in a fortunate month, and upon an auspicious day, I undertook the building of the raw-brick terrace and the burnt-brick casing of the Temple. I strengthened its foundation, and I placed a titular record on the part which I had rebuilt. I set my hand to build it up, and to exalt its summit. As it had been in ancient times, so I built up its structure. As it had been in former days, thus I exalted its head.'"

Professor Rawlinson assigns B.C. 2300 as the date of the building of the Temple. But as Colenso remarks, his reasoning is very loose. His date, however, isantecedentto the supposed time of the building of Babel, and according to his own chronology the lattermayhave been a tradition of the former. Add to this that the ruins ofBirs Nimroudare extant, while there is no vestige of the ruins of Babel. According to Kalisch's chronology,Birs Nimroudwas built long after the supposed time of Moses; and ifhewrote the Pentateuch our position cannot be maintained. But he did not write the Pentateuch or any portion of it. The writer of the Jehovist portion of Genesis, which contains the story of the Tower of Babel, certainly did not flourish before the time of Solomon, about b.c. 1015—975. Here, then, is an interval of a century. That is a short period for the growth of a

legend. Yet, as Colenso observes, "as thetowerwas apparently an observatory, and the fact of its being dedicated to the seven ancient planets shows that astronomical observations had made considerable progress among the Chaldeans at the time when it was built, the traditions connected with it may have embodied stories of a much earlier date, to which the new building gave fresh currency."

The Temple of Jupiter Belus with its tower was partially destroyed by Xerxes b.c. 490; upon which, says Kalisch, "the fraudulent priests appropriated to themselves the lands and enormous revenues attached to it, and seem, from this reason, to have been averse to its restoration." A part of the edifice still existed more than five centuries later, and was mentioned by Pliny. But the other part was, in the time of Alexander the Great, a vast heap of ruins. He determined to rebuild it, but desisted from the enterprise, when he found that ten thousand workmen could not remove the rubbish in two months. Benjamin of Tudela described it in the twelfth century, after which, for more than six hundred years, it remained unnoticed and unknown. The ruins were rediscovered by Niebuhr in 1756; subsequent explorers more accurately described them; and they were thoroughly examined, and their monumental records deciphered, about thirty years ago.

The myth attaching to it is not unique. As Kalisch observes, "most of the ancient nations possessed myths concerning impious giants, who attempted to storm heaven, either to share it with the immortal gods, or to expel them from it." And even the orthodox Delitzsch allows that "the Mexicans have a legend of a tower-building, as well as of a Flood. Xelhua, one of the seven giants rescued in the flood, built the great pyramid of Cholula, in order to reach heaven, until the gods, angry at his audacity, threw fire upon the building, and broke it down, whereupon every separate family received a language of its own." To lessen the force of this, Delitzsch says that the Mexican legend has been much colored by its narrators, chiefly Dominicans and Jesuits; but he is obliged to admit that there is great significance in the fact that the Mexican terrace-pyramid closely resembles the construction of the Temple of Belus. No argument can vitiate the conclusion that as similar myths to that of Genesis abounded in ancient times, it is highly illogical to attach particular importance to any one of them. If one is historic, all are historic. We are justified in holding that the Jewish story of the Tower of Babel is only a modification of the older story of the Temple of Belus.

We will conclude this Number by mentioning a few facts, not speculations, which are exceedingly curious, and which present grave difficulty to the orthodox believer.

According to the Bible, in Abraham's time, not four centuries after the Deluge, the descendants of Noah's three sons had multiplied into the four great kingdoms ofShinar(Babylon),Elam,Egypt,

andGerar, besides a multitude of smaller nations. Does any instructed man believe in the possibility of such multiplication? It is altogether incredible.

Some of these nations had reached a high degree of civilisation. Indeed, the temples, tombs, pyramids, manners, customs, and arts of Egypt betoken afull-grownnation. The sculptures of the Fourth Dynasty, the earliest extant, and which must be assigned to the date of about 3500 b.c., are almost as perfect as those of her Augustan age, two thousand years later. Professor Rawlinson seeks to obviate this difficulty by appealing to the version of the Seventy instead of to the Hebrew text, by which he obtains the remote antiquity of 8159 B.C., instead of 2848, for the Deluge. But this chronology does not reach within four hundred years of the civilisation denoted by the sculptures referred to! And there must have been milleniums of silent progress in Egypt before that period.

On the ancient monuments of Egypt the negro head, face, hair, form, and color, are the same as we observe in our own day. Consequently, the orthodox believer must hold that, in a few generations, the human family branched out into strongly marked varieties. History discountenances this assumption, and Biology plainly disproves it. Archdeacon Pratt supposes that Shem, Ham, and Japheth "had in them elements differing as widely as the Asiatic, the African, and the European, differ from each other." He forgets that they were brothers, sons of the same father and presumably of the same mother! Such extraordinary evolution throws Darwinism into the shade.

Noah lived fifty-eight years after the birth of Abraham. Shem lived a hundred and ten years after the birth of Isaac, and fifty years after the birth of Jacob. How was it that neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob knew either of them. They were the most interesting and important men alive at the time. They had seen the world before the Flood. One of them had seen people who knew Adam. They had lived through the confusion of tongues at Babel, and were well acquainted with the whole history of the world. Yet they are never once mentioned in Scripture during all the centuries they survived their exit from the ark. Why is this? Noah before his death was the most venerable man existing. He was five hundred years older than any other man. He must have been an object of universal regard. Yet we have no record of the second half of his career; no account is given of his burial; no monument was erected to his memory. Who will explain this astounding neglect? The Bible is a strange book, and they are strange people who believe it.

BALAAM'S ASS.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—IX.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The ass has figured extensively in romance. His long ears and peculiar bray are explained by a story which goes back to the Flood. On that occasion, it is said, the male donkey was inadvertently left outside the ark, but being a good swimmer, he nevertheless managed to preserve his life. After many desperate efforts he at last succeeded in calling out the patriarch's name, as nearly as the vocal organs of a jackass would allow. "No-ah, No-ah," cried the forlorn beast. Noah's attention was at last aroused, and on looking out of window to see who was calling, he perceived the poor jackass almost spent and faintly battling with the waves. Quickly opening the window, he caught Neddy by the two ears and hauled him in. This he did with such vigor that Neddy's aural appendages were considerably elongated; and ever since donkeys have had long ears, and brayed "No-ah, No-ah" at the approach of wet weather. For the sake of Christians who are not well acquainted with God's Word, we add that this story is not in the Bible.

Classical scholars and students of modern literature know how the ass has been treated by poets and romancers. The stolid animal has generally been made the subject of comedy. Drunken and impotent Silenus, in the Pagan mythology, joins in the professions of Bacchus on a sober ass, and the patient animal staggers beneath the heavy burden of a fat-paunched tipsy god. Apulius and Lucian transform the hero of their common story into an ass, and in that shape he encounters the most surprising experiences. Voltaire makes an ass play a wonderful part in his "Pucelle." And in all these cases it is worth noticing how the profane wits remember the ass's relation to Priapian mysteries, from his fabled interruption of the garden-god's attempt on the nymph Lotis downwards, and assign to him marvellous amatory adventures. Erasmus, in his "Praise of Folly," does not forget the ass, with whom he compares the majority of men for stupidity, obstinacy, and lubricity; nor is the noble animal forgotten by Rabelais, who cracks many a joke and points many a witticism at his expense.

Our own genial humorist, Charles Lamb, confesses however to a deep tenderness for Neddy, and dwells with delight on the protection which his thick hide affords against the cruel usuage of man. He has, says Lamb, "a tegument impervious to ordinary stripes. The malice of a child or a weak hand can make feeble impressions on him. His back offers no mark to a puny foeman. To a common whip or switch his hide presents an absolute-insensibility. You might as well pretend to scourge a schoolboy with a tough pair of leather breeches on." Lamb also quotes the following passage from a tract printed in 1595, entitled "The Noblenesse of the Asse; a Work Rare, Learned, and Excellent": "He refuseth no burden; he goes whither he is sent, without any contradiction. He lifts not his foote against any one; he bytes not; he is no fugitive, nor malicious affected. He doth all-things in good sort, and to his liking that hath cause to employ him. If

strokes be given him, he cares not for them." True, the ass is not much given to kicking or biting, but he has an awkward knack of quietly lying down when he is indisposed to work, and of rolling over with equal quietude if a rider happens to be on his back. But the old author is so enchanted with the "asse" that he does not stay to notice this scurvy trick. He even goes on to express his liking for the ass's bray, calling Neddy "a rare musitian," and saying that "to heare the musicke of five or six voices changed to so many of asses is amongst them to heare a song of world without end."

Sterne, in his "Sentimental Journey," has a chapter entitled "The Dead Ass," wherein the animal is lifted into the sphere of pathos. And lastly, Coleridge has some very pious musings on an ass, wherein the animal is lifted into the sphere of religion.

Now, dear reader, you begin to see the drift of this long exordium, although my purpose was indeed twofold. First, I wished, after the example of my betters in literature, to give you a slight glimpse of the immense extent of my learning. Secondly, I wished to lead you through the various stages of literary treatment of the ass, from the comic to the pathetic, and finally to-the religious, in order that you might approach in a proper frame of mind the consideration of Balaam's ass, who is the most remarkable of all the four-legged asses mentioned in the Bible. There were others. Asses were being sought by Saul, the son of Kish, when he found a kingdom of subjects instead. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass, and also apparently on a colt, having probably one leg over each. With the jawbone of an ass Samson slew a thousand Philistines; and if the rest of the animal accorded with that particular bone, he must have been a tough ass indeed. But all these are of little interest or importance beside the wonderful ass of the prophet Balaam, whose history is contained, with that of his master, in the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth chapters of the Book of Numbers.

Soon after the Wandering Jews in the desert were plagued by "fiery serpents" for asking Moses to give them a slight change in their monotonous bill of fare, they warred against the Amorites and pretty nearly exterminated them. Whereupon Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, grew "sore afraid." He called together the "elders of Midian" with those of Moab, and said that in his opinion the Jews would lick them all up as the ox licked up the grass of the field.

Against such a ferocious gang as the Jews, with a bloody God of Battles to help them, human valor promised little success; so Balak resolved to solicit supernatural aid. Accordingly he sent messengers unto Balaam the son of Beor, a renowned and potent soothsayer, desiring him to come and curse the people of Israel.

The King had implicit confidence in Balaam. "Whom thou blessest," said he, "is blessed, and whom thou cursest is cursed." This great prophet must have wrought prodigious wonders in his time to gain so magnificent a reputation; and if the king's panegyric on him was true, he must have been a dangerous person to those who annoyed him and made him swear.

The "elders of Moab and the elders of Midian," who were Balak's messengers, went to Pethor, where Balaam resided. As the reader might expect, they did not go empty-handed, but took with them "the rewards of divination." What these were we are not told. No doubt they were very handsome. The prophetical business requires large profits to compensate for the absence of quick returns; and in any case it is not to be supposed that a man who can do what no one else can, will begin work without a heavy retaining fee. We conclude that Balaam, like nearly every prophet mentioned in history, had a good eye for the main chance, and did not trust very much in the bounty of the gods. He was never hard up for bread and cheese while other people were hard up for divine assistance, and as that was an ignorant and credulous age, we presume that his larder was well-stocked. He must, indeed, have had a fine time, for he was the biggest pot in his own line of business in all that district.

Balaam knew his business well. It would never do for a prophet, a soothsayer, a wizard, or a diviner, to give prompt answers to his applicants, or even to make his answers plain when he does give them. That would render the profession cheap and rob it of mystery. So Balaam, therefore, said to the messengers, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me."

Now this reference tothe Lordis very surprising. The Moabites worshipped Baal, and no doubt they had the utmost contempt for Jehovah. Yet Balaam, who was a prophet of their religion, tells them that he will consult the god of Israel on the subject of their visit! This is one of the self-contradictions with which the Bible abounds.

The next incident of the story is no less remarkable. God, the infinite spirit of the universe, paid Balaam a visit; and although he knows everything, past, present, and to come, he asked the prophet "What men are these with thee?" Balaam gave a straightforward reply, for he doubtless knew that prevarication and subterfuge were useless with God. Said he, "Balak the son of Zippor, King of Moab, has sent unto me, saying, Behold there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them and drive them out." The precision of Balaam's language is admirable, and so is its accuracy. He neither desired to keep the Lord in suspense, nor to leave him in ignorance of necessary details. God's answer was equally brief and perspicuous: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed."

This interview between God and Balaam, like the following ones, occurred in the night. The Lord seems to have been always afraid of daylight, or else to have had a peculiar fondness for the dark. Perhaps he thought that during the night there was less chance of the conversation being interrupted, and it is well known that the Lord loves privacy and does not like conversing with more than one at a time. He agrees with us that "two's company and three's none."

In the morning Balaam got out of bed and told Balak's messengers to return and say that the Lord would not let him come; and they at once set out for the capital.

Balak, however, was not to be so easily put off. He seems to have regarded the prophet's talk about the Lord's prohibition as "all my eye." "Perhaps," said he to himself, "my messengers were small fry in the sight of Balaam, and he is therefore displeased. My presents also may have been too small I should have recollected that Balaam has a very exalted opinion of himself, and is renowned for his avarice. What a stupid I was, to-be sure. However, I'll try again. This time I'll send a deputation of big guns, and promise him great wealth and high position in the state. He can't refuse such a tempting offer." Straight-way he "sent yet again princes, more and more honorable" than those who went before, and commanded them to urge Balaam to let nothing hinder him from coming.

Balaam slightly resented this treatment. He told the messengers-that if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do more or less. Yet he apparently deemed it politic to make another trial. He was, of course, quite aware that God is unchangeable, but somehow he thought the Lord might alter his mind. So he bade the messengers to tarry there that night while he consulted God afresh.

Balaam's expectation was realised. The Lord did change his mind. He "came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." So the prophet rose up in the morning, saddled and mounted his wonderful ass, and went off with the princes of Moab.

Poor Balaam, however, did not reflect that as the Lord had changed his mind once he might change it twice, and the omission very nearly cost him his life. He was unfortunately ignorant of what happened to Moses on a similar occasion. After the Lord had dispatched the Jewish prophet to Egypt to rescue his people from bondage, he met him at an inn, where perhaps they both put up for the night, and sought to kill him. The same thing happened now. No sooner had Balaam set out on his journey than "God's anger was kindled against him because he went." This Jehovah is a queer God and dreadfully hard to please. If you don't obey his orders you run the

risk of being damned, and if you do you stand a good chance of being murdered. The only safe course is to get out of his way and have nothing to do with him.

The "angel of the Lord" stood in Balaam's path, with a drawn sword in his hand, ready to kill the prophet whose only crime was having done exactly what he was told. But neither Balaam nor his two servants saw him. The ass, however, had better eyesight. Being only an ass, and not a man, he had a greater aptitude for seeing angels. Not liking the look of this formidable stranger, Neddy bolted from the pathway into a field. Balaam, who saw no reason for such behavior except sheer perverseness, began to whack his ass and tried to turn him * into the right road. Neddy succumbed to this forcible argument and jogged on again. The angel of the Lord had apparently, in the meantime, made himself invisible even to a jackass. His intention was ultimately to kill Balaam, but he delayed the fatal stroke in order to make the most of the comedy which he foresaw. Going a little in front, he "stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that" Neddy caught sight of the angel again, and being unable this time to bolt into the field, he lurched against the wall, and gave Balaam's foot a good scrunching. Still the prophet suspected nothing out of the common, for that was an ordinary trick of refractory asses. Poor Neddy, therefore, got another thrashing. Then the angel of the Lord went on further, and "stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left." Neddy estimated the certain penalty of refusing to proceed and the probable penalty of going forward. After comparing them he decided to stop where he was, and then quietly laid down. Balaam's anger was once more kindled by this stupid obstinacy, and he whacked the ass again with his staff.

* Balaam's ass was a "she," but the sex is immaterial, andas we commenced with the masculine gender we will continuewith it.

Then the Lord intervened, and brought about the most extraordinary incident of this wonderful story. He "opened the mouth of the ass," and lo! instead of braying Neddy spoke. Without a note of preparation he began to upbraid his master in good Moabitish. "What have I done," said he, "that thou hast smitten me these three times."

Singular to relate, Balaam was not in the least astonished at hearing an ass speak. He took it as quite an ordinary occurrence. One is almost inclined to think that the prophet and his donkey had held many a conversation before. In the Bible no one ever is astonished at anything, however wonderful. When the serpent accosted Eve in the garden of Eden, she was not at all surprised, but went on with the colloquy as though talking serpents were common things. If a dumb animal were nowadays to address a man with "How d'ye do?" he would certainly be very much startled;

but when the same thing occurred in the old Bible days, the man at once replied "Very well, thank you, how are you?"

Balaam promptly answered the ass's question. "Because," said he, "thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." Then the ass rejoined, "Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?" This was a poser. Balaam scratched his head and reflected, but at last he was obliged to say "Nay."

Neddy had so far the best of the argument. But Balaam had the practical argument of the stick left, and no doubt he was about to convince the donkey with it. All arguments, practical or otherwise, would however have left the dispute exactly where it stood. Neddy saw the angel, and that was enough for him. Balaam did not see the angel, but only Neddy's obstinate stupidity. In short, they reasoned from different premises, and could not therefore arrive at the same conclusion. They might have argued till doomsday had not the Lord again intervened. He "opened Balaam's eyes," so that he also "saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand." Then Balaam "bowed his head, and fell flat on his face," and there he and Neddy laid side by side, two asses together.

Now, dear reader, you will observe that the ass, being indeed an ass, saw the angel first, and that Balaam, who was a wise man, did not see the angel until his wits were disordered by the wonder of a talking donkey. Does this not bear out great Bacon's remark that "in all superstition, wise men follow fools"? And may we not say, that if asses did not see angels first, wise men would never see them after?

The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, while he remained flat on his face, "Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: and the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive." The moral of this is that asses stand the best chance of salvation, and that wise men run a frightful risk of damnation until they lose their wits.

Balaam recognised the awful mess he was in, and being by this time as limp as a wet rag, he made the most abject apology. "I have sinned," he said, "for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me." This strange reasoning shows still more clearly how the poor prophet had taken leave of his senses. He had not sinned at all, for he was strictly obeying God's commands; nor was it his fault that the angel remained so long invisible. When the Lord "opened his eyes,"

and made his vision like unto the vision of an ass, he saw the angel plainly enough; and how could he possibly have done so before?

"I'll go back," added Balaam, thinking that if he sinned so greatly in going forward, he had better return home. But the angel of the Lord, who had intended to kill him for advancing, now told him to "go with the men." And Balaam went with them, keeping his weather eye open during the rest of the journey.

Balak was heartily glad to see Balaam. The prophet had been a long time coming, but better late than never. The next day they went "up into the high places of Baal," from which they could see the utmost part of the people of Israel. "There they are," said Balak, "confound them! leprous slaves out of Egypt, bent on stealing other people's lands, and sticking to all they can lay hands on; bloodthirsty vagabonds, who fight people with whom they have no quarrel, and kill men, women, and children when they are victorious. Now, Balaam, do your duty. Curse them, and lay it on thick."

Seven altars were built, and seven oxen and seven rams sacrificed on them. But all this good meat was wasted, for when Balaam "went to an high place," God met him, according to agreement, and told him what to say. And lo! when the prophet returned to the king, he blessed the Jews instead of cursing them.

"Hullo, Balaam, what's this?" cried the king. "I asked you to curse my enemies and you've gone and blessed them. What d'ye mean?" "True," answered Balaam, "but I told you that I could only speak what the Lord put into my mouth."

Balak appears to have been just as sceptical as Pharaoh about the God of the Jews. He attributed his disappointment to a freak of the prophet, and not being easily baffled he resolved to try again. So he took Balaam up another high place, and built seven fresh altars, and sacrificed on them seven more bullocks and rams; after which he repeated his invitation. Again Balaam went farther to consult the Lord, whom he found waiting for him, and received his instructions. And lo! when he returned to Balak he again blessed the Jews instead of cursing them.

Balak resolved to try again. He took Balaam to another high place, built seven more altars, and sacrificed seven more bullocks and seven more rams. But again the prophet blessed Israel, and a third time the king was sold. Then he gave it up, and Balaam and his ass went home.

What became of the ass is unknown. Perhaps he went into the prophetical business himself, and eventually retired on a very handsome fortune. Perhaps he went about as a preacher of the

gospel as it was then understood; in which case, judging from the rule of success in later ages, we have no doubt that he attracted large audiences and delighted all who were fortunate enough to sit under him. And when he died all the two-legged asses in Moab probably wept and refused to be comforted.

Balaam's end was tragic. The thirteenth chapter ofJoshuainforms us that he was eventually slain by the very people he had thrice blessed. After an account of one of the bloody wars of Jehovah's bandits we read that "Balaam also the son of Beor, the sooth-sayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them." The angel of the Lord spared him, but God's butchers cut his throat at last. On the whole he might as well have cursed the Jews up and down to Balak's satisfaction, and taken the handsome rewards which were offered him on such easy terms.

Here endeth the story of Balaam's Ass. I hope my reader still believes it, for if not, he will be reprobate while he lives and damned when he dies.

GOD'S THIEVES IN CANAAN.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—X.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Some years ago the righteous indignation of England was roused by the daily record of atrocities perpetrated in Bulgaria by the Turkish bashi-bazouks. Men were wantonly massacred, pregnant women ripped up, and maidens outraged by brutal lust. Our greatest statesman uttered a clarion-cry which pealed through the whole nation, and the friends of the Turk in high places shrank abashed and dismayed before the stern response of the people. Many clergymen attended public meetings, and denounced not only the Turks, but also their Mohammedanism. They alleged that the Koran sanctioned, even if it did not command, the horrors which had been wrought in Eastern Europe, and they declared that there was no hope for a country which derived its maxims of state from such an accursed book. Those denunciations did honor to their hearts, but very little to their heads. For every brutal injunction in the Koran, twenty might be found in the Bible. Before the clergy cry out against the Scriptures of Islam, they should purge their own of those horrid features which are an insult to man and a blasphemy against God. Mohammed gave savage counsels to his followers with respect to waging war, but these sink into insignificance beside the counsels given to the Jews by Moses in the name of God.

Bible Romances are generally comic, but this one is infinitely tragic. The whole range of history affords no worse instances of cold-blooded cruelty than those which God's thieves, the Jews, perpetrated in Canaan, when they took forcible possession of cities they had not built and fields they had never ploughed. "How that red rain will make the harvest grow!" exclaims Byron of the blood shed at Waterloo; and surely the first harvests reaped by the Jews in Canaan must have been luxuriantly rich, for the ground had been drenched with the blood of the slain.

Before Moses died, according to the Bible, he delivered an elaborate code of laws to his people in the name of God. The portions referring to war are contained in the twentieth chapter ofDeuteronomy. Here they stand in all their naked hideous-ness:—

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. But thou shalt utterly destroy them."

Such were the fiendish commands of Jehovah, the bloody maxims of inspired war. Let us see how the Jews carried them out.

During the lifetime of Moses they made a good beginning; for in their war against Midian they slew 48,000 men, 48,000 women, and 20,000 boys, and took as spoil 32,000 virgins. But they did much better under Joshua.

After God had dispatched Moses and secretly buried him, so that nobody should ever discover his sepulchre, Joshua was appointed leader in his stead. He was "full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him." Then, as now, religious superiors transmitted holiness to their inferiors through the skull. God accepted the nomination of Moses and instructed Joshua in his duties. He told him to be above all "strong and very courageous," and to fight the enemy according to the law of Moses. Joshua was not the man to neglect such advice.

Joshua was soon ordered to cross the river Jordan and begin the holy war. But before doing so, he dispatched two spies to reconnoitre Jericho, the first place to be attacked. They reached the city by night, and of course required lodgings. Instinct led them to the house of Rahab, the harlot. She proved a very good friend; for when messengers came from the king in the morning to inquire about them, she said that they had gone, and advised the messengers to go after them, which they did. Meanwhile she hid the spies under some flax on the roof of her house, and at night "let them down by a cord through the window, for she dwelt on the town wall." Before they left, however, she made a covenant with them. Like many other ladies of easy virtue, or no virtue at all, Rahab was piously inclined. She had conceived a great respect for Jehovah, and was assured that his people would overcome all their enemies. But she had also a great respect for her own skin; so she made the two spies promise on behalf of the Jews that when they took Jericho they would spare her and all her relatives; and they were to recognise her house by the "line of scarlet thread in the window." They got back safe to Joshua and told him it was all right; the people were in a dreadful funk, and all the land would soon be theirs.

Joshua got up early the next morning and told the Jews that the Lord was going to do wonders. They wanted to get "on the other side of Jordan." and the Lord meant to ferry them across in his own style. Twelve men were selected, one from each tribe, to follow the priests who bore the ark in front, and all the Jewish host came after them. As it was harvest time, the river had overflowed its banks. When the priests' feet "were dipped in the brim of the water," the river parted in twain; on one side the waters "stood and rose up upon an heap," while on the other side they "failed and were cut off." As no miracle was worked further up the river to stop the supplies, the "heap" must have been a pretty big one before the play ended. A clear passage having been made, the Jews all crossed on dry ground. They seem to have done this in less than a day, but three millions of people could not march past one spot in less than a week. Perhaps the Lord gave them a shove behind.

The twelve selected Jews, one from each tribe, took twelve big stones out of the bed of the river, which were "pitched in Gilgal" as "a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." For ever is a long time and is not yet ended. Those stones should be there now. Why don't the clergy try to discover them? If brought to London and set up on the Thames embankment they would throw Cleopatra's needle into the shade.

When God had ferried the Jews across, and picked out the twelve big stones as aids to memory, the "heap" of water tumbled down and overflowed the banks of the river. Joshua and his people then encamped near Jericho, in readiness for greater wonders to come.

Three days afterwards the manna ceased. Jehovah's fighting cocks wanted a more invigorating diet. This time they did not ask for a change, but the Lord vouchsafed it spontaneously.

All the males, too, were circumcised by God's orders. This Jewish rite had been neglected during the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, but it was now resumed. From the text it seems that Joshua circumcised all the males himself. As they numbered about a million and a half it must have been a long job. Allowing a minute for each amputation, it would in the natural course of things have taken him about three years to do them all; but being divinely aided, he finished his task in a single day. Samson's jaw-bone was nothing to Joshua's knife.

Soon after Joshua, being near Jericho, like Balaam's ass saw an angel with a drawn sword in his hand. When he had made obeisance, by falling flat and taking off his shoes, he received from this heavenly messenger precise instructions as to the capture of the doomed city. The Lord's way of storming fortresses is unique in military literature. Said he to Joshua—"Ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpet? And it shall come to pass that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

Did ever another general receive such extraordinary instructions from his commander-in-chief? God's soldiers need no cannon, or battering rams, or bombshells; all they require is a few rams' horns and good lungs for shouting.

God's orders were obeyed. Six days in succession did the Jews march round the walls of Jericho, no doubt to the great bewilderment of its inhabitants, who probably wondered why they didn't come on, and felt that there was something uncanny in this roundabout siege. On the seventh day they went round the city seven times. How tired they must have been! Jericho, being a capital city, could not have been less than several miles in circumference. The priests blew with the trumpets, the people shouted with a great shout, and the walls of Jericho fell flat—as flat as the simpletons who believe it.

A scene of horror ensued. The Jews "utterly destroyed all there was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." Only Rahab and her relatives were spared. The silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, were put into the Lord's treasury—that is, handed over to the priests; and then the city was burnt with fire.

God commanded this, and his chosen people executed it Could Jericho have been treated worse if the Devil himself had planned the fight, and the vilest fiends from hell had conducted it?

Rahab the harlot, being saved with all her relatives, who were perhaps as bad as she, dwelt with the Jews ever afterwards. Whether she continued in her old profession we are unable to say. But it is certain that the Jews soon after grew very corrupt, and the Lord's anger was kindled against them. The first result of God's displeasure was that the Jews became demoralised as warriors. Three thousand of them, who went up against Ai, were routed, and thirty-six of them were slain. This seems a very small number, but, as we have already observed, the Jewish chroniclers were much given to bragging. Their losses were always very small, and the enemy's very great.

After this rebuff the Jews funked; their hearts "melted and became as water." Joshua rent his clothes, fell upon his face before the ark, and remained there until the evening. The elders of Israel did likewise, and they all put dust on their heads. To conclude the performance Joshua expostulated with God, asked him whether he had brought his people over Jordan only to betray them to their enemies, and expressed a hearty wish that they had never crossed the river at all.

The Lord told Joshua to get up, as it was no use lying there. Israel had sinned, and God had determined not to help them until they had purged themselves. Some one, in fact, had stolen a portion of the spoil of Jericho, all of which belonged to the Lord, that is to the priests, who evidently helped to concoct this pretty story. Joshua forthwith proceeded to hunt the sinner out. His method was very singular. He resolved to go through the twelve tribes until the culprit was found. The tribe of Judah was examined first, and luckily in the very first family "Achan was taken," although we are not told how he was spotted. Achan confessed that he had appropriated of the spoil a "goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight," which he had hidden under his tent. His doom was swift and terrible; he was stoned to death, and his body burnt with fire. We may think his punishment severe, but we cannot deny his guilt. He, however, was not the only sufferer. Jehovah was not to be satisfied with a small quantity of blood. Achans's sons and daughters were stoned with him, and their bodies were burnt like his. His very oxen, asses, and sheep were served in the same manner. A great heap of stones was raised over their cinders, and then "the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." Jehovah acted just like the savage old chieftain of a savage tribe. As irascible tempers do not improve with age, we presume that he is still as peppery as ever. Yet we are asked to love, venerate, and worship this brutal being, as the ideal of all that is merciful, just, and pure.

Immediately after Joshua sent thirty thousand men against Ai, which they took with great ease. All its inhabitants, from the oldest man to the youngest babe, were massacred. The city itself

was burnt into a desolate heap. The King of Ai was reserved to furnish the Jews with a little extra sport, by way of dessert to the bloody feast. He was hanged on a tree until eventide, when his carcass was taken down and "buried under a heap of stones." Joshua "then built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal," who appears to have been mightily well pleased with the whole business.

Joshua's next exploit was indeed miraculous. He gathered all the Jews together, men, women, children, and even the strangers, and read to them all the laws of Moses, without omitting a single word. It must have been a long job, and Joshua's throat must have been rather dry at the end. But the greatest wonder is how he made himself heard to three millions of people at once. No other orator ever addressed so big an audience. Either their ears were very sharp, or his voice was terribly loud. The people in the front rank must have been nearly stunned with the sound. Joshua could outroar Bottom the weaver by two or three miles.

The people of Gibeon, by means of messengers who palmed themselves off on Joshua as strangers from a distant country, contrived to obtain a league whereby their lives were spared. When their craft was detected they were sentenced to become hewers of wood and drawers of water to the Jews; in other words, their slaves.

Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem; Hoham, king of Hebron; Piram, king of Jamuth; Japhia, king of Lachish; and Debir, king of Eglon; banded themselves together to punish Gibeon for making peace with the Jews. Joshua went with all his army to their relief. He fell upon the armies of the five kings, discomfitted them with great slaughter, and chased them along the way to Beth-horon. As they fled the Lord joined in the hunt. He "cast down great stones from heaven upon them" and killed a huge number, even "more than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."

When we read that Pan fought with the Greeks against the Persians at Marathon, we must regard it as a fable; but when we read that Jehovah fought with the Jews against the five kings at Gibeon, we must regard it as historical truth, and if we doubt it we shall be eternally damned.

Not only did the Lord join in the war-hunt, but Joshua wrought the greatest miracle on record by causing a stationary body to stand still. He stopped the sun from "going down" and lengthened out the day for about twelve hours, in order that the Jews might see to pursue and kill the flying foe. "The sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." What Joshua really stopped, if he stopped anything, was the earth, for its revolution, and not the motion of the sun, causes the phenomena of day and night. Science tells us that the arrest of the earth's motion would generate a frightful quantity of heat, enough to

cause a general conflagration. Yet nothing of the kind happened. How is it, too, that no other ancient people has preserved any record of this marvellous occurrence? The Egyptians, for instance, carefully noted eclipses and such events, but they jotted down no memorandum of Joshua's supreme miracle. Why is this? How can Christians explain it?

When Jupiter personated Amphytrion, and visited his bride Alcmena, the amorous god lengthened out the night in order to prolong his enjoyment. Why may we not believe this? Is it not as credible, and quite as moral, as the Bible story of Jehovah's lengthening out the day to prolong a massacre? Were the Greeks any bigger liars than the Jews?

It has been suggested that Joshua was so elated with the victory that he drank more than was good for him, and got in such a state that in the evening he saw two moons instead of one. Nobody liked to contradict him, but the elders of Israel, to harmonise their leader's vision, declared that it comprised the sun and the moon, instead of two moons, which were clearly absurd. The court poet improved on this explanation, and composed the neat little poem which is partially preserved by the Jewish chronicler, who asks "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" The waggish laureate Jasher is supposed by some profane speculators to have got up the whole miracle himself.

The five kings fled with their armies and "hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah." Joshua ordered the mouth to be closed with big stones until the pursuit was ended. At last they were brought out and treated with great ignominy. Their necks were made footstools of by the captains of Israel, and they were afterwards hung on trees until the evening, when their carcasses were flung into the cave. After this highly civilised treatment of their captives, the Jews took all the capital cities of these five kings and slew all the inhabitants. Then they desolated the hills and vales. Joshua "left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded." Hazor and many other places were also treated in the same way, "there was not any left to breathe."

Jehovah was not, however, able to execute his intentions completely. The children of Judah could not drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem; nor could the children of Manasseh entirely drive out the Canaanites from their cities. After Joshua's death, as we read in the book ofJudges, "the Lord was with Judah, and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Iron chariots were too strong for the Almighty! Yet he managed to take off the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots at the Red Sea. Why could he not do the same on this occasion? Were the linch-pins too tight or the wheels too heavy?

Joshua died at the ripe old age of a hundred and ten. Whatever else he may have been, he was certainly one of the gamest fighting cocks that ever lived. Jehovah never found a better instrument for his bloody purposes. They buried him at Timnath-serah. Joseph's old bones, which Moses brought out of Egypt, were buried at Shechem. Had they been kept much longer some Hebrew "old-clo' man" might have carried them off and made an honest penny by them.

After Joshua's death, the tribe of Judah fought against Adoni-bezek. When they caught him they cut off his thumbs and his big toes. He acknowledged the justice of his punishment, and admitted that God had served him just as he had himself served seventy kings, whose great toes he had cut off, and made them eat under his table. Kings must have been very plentiful in those days.

During Joshua's lifetime the Jews served God, and they kept pretty straight during the lifetime of the elders who had known him. But directly these died they went astray; "they forsook the Lord and worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth." God punished them by letting their enemies oppress them. "Nevertheless," says the story, "the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them; and they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so..... And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other Gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way."

God's selection of the Jews as his favorite people does not seem to reflect much credit on his sagacity. All who came out of Egypt, except two persons, turned out so badly that they were pronounced unfit to enter the promised land, and doomed to die in the wilderness. The new generation who entered Canaan, after being circumcised to make them holy; after seeing the miracles of Jordan and the valley of Ajalon; after having gained a home by God's assistance in a land flowing with milk and honey; this very generation proved worse than their fathers. The original inhabitants of Canaan, whom they dispossessed, could hardly have surpassed them in sin against Jehovah; and therefore the ruthless slaughter of their conquest was as unreasonable as it was inhuman. So much for "God's Thieves in Canaan."

CAIN AND ABEL.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—11.

By G. W. FOOTE.

God completed the immense labors described in the first chapter of Genesis by creating man "in his own image," after which he serenely contemplated "everything that he had made, and; behold, it was very good." Yet the first woman deceived her husband, the first man was duped, and their first son was a murderer. God could not have looked very far ahead when he pronounced everything "very good." It is clear that the original pair of human beings were very badly made. As the Lord was obliged to take a rest on the seventh day, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he was pretty tired on the sixth, and scamped the work. All the sin and suffering in this world is the consequence of man having been the fag-end of creation. If the Lord had rested on the sixth day and created man on the seventh, how different things might have been! The Devil would probably have done no business in this world, and the population of hell would be no more now than it was six thousand years ago.

After leaving the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, having no fear of Malthus in their hearts, began to "multiply and replenish the earth." When their first child was born, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," poor Adam's share in the youngster's advent being quietly ignored. She christened him Cain, a name which comes from a Hebrew root signifying toacquire. Cain was regarded as anacquisition, and his mother was very proud of him. The time came when she wished he had never been born.

Some time after, but how long is unknown, Eve gave birth to a second son, called Abel. Josephus explains this name as meaninggrief, but Hebrew scholars at present explain it as meaningnothingness, vanity, frailty. The etymology of Abel's name shows conclusively that the story is a myth. Why should Eve give her second boy so sinister a name? How could she have so clearly anticipated his sad fate? Cain's name has, too, another significance besides that of "acquisition," for, as Kalisch points out, it also belongs to the Hebrew verb tostrike, and "signifies either the man of violence and the sire of murderers, or the ancestor of the inventors of iron instruments and of weapons of destruction."

Cain and Abel had to get their own living. Being born after the Fall, they were of course debarred from the felicities of Eden, and were compelled to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, in accordance with God's wide-reaching curse. Both, so to speak, were forced to deal in provisions. Abel went in for meat, and Cain for vegetables. This was an admirable division of labor, and they ought to have got on very well together; one finding beef and mutton for dinner, and the other potatoes and greens. They might even have paid each other handsome compliments across the table. Abel might have said "My dear Cain, these vegetables are first-rate," and Cain might have replied, "My dear Abel, I never tasted a better cut."

Delitzsch, whose criticisms are huge jokes, frowns on this picture of fraternal peace. He opines that Cain and Abel were vegetarians and never enjoyed a beef-steak or a mutton-chop. Abel kept only small domestic cattle, such as sheep and goats, whose woolly skin might be used to cover "their sinful nakedness." The utmost Delitzsch allows is that they perhaps drank milk, which, although animal nutriment, is not obtained through the destruction of animal life. But, as Colenso observes, animals were slain for sacrifices, and they may have been killed also for eating. Besides, even a vegetable diet involves infinite destruction of minute animal life. On the whole we prefer to disregard Delitzsch in this matter, and to stand by our pleasant picture of the two first brothers at dinner.

Their admirable arrangement, however, brought mischief in the end. It was right enough so far as they were concerned, but it worked badly in relation to God. They liked a mixed diet, but the Lord was purely carnivorous and liked all meat. He devoured Abel's provisions with great relish, but turned up his nose at Cain's vegetables. The mealiest potatoes, the tenderest green peas, had no charm for him; and even the leeks, the garlic, the onions, and the cucumbers, which were afterwards so beloved by his Jewish favorites, were quite unattractive. In the language of Scripture, "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect" Elsewhere in the Bible we read "God is no respecter of persons," but Scripture is full of contradictions, and such things present no difficulty to the spirit of faith, which, like hope, "believeth all things."

Why was Cain's offering slighted? The Bible does not tell us, but many reasons have been advanced by commentators. The Talmud supposes that Cain did not offer hisbestproduce, but only the inferior kinds, thus giving God what he did not require himself, and treating the holy rite of sacrifice as a means of working off his refuse vegetables. Kalisch waives this theory, and thinks it probable that Cain's sin was primarily not against God, but against man. "The supposition," he says, "is obvious that envy and jealousy had long filled the heart of Cain, when he contrasted his laborious and toilsome life with the pleasant and easy existence of his brother Abel. With incessant exertion, tormented by anxiety, and helplessly dependent on the uncertainty of the skies, he forced a scanty subsistence out of the womb of the repugnant soil; whilst his brother enjoyed a life of security and abundance, in the midst of rich valleys, beautiful hills, and charming rural scenes. And while he envied Abel's prosperity, he despised his idleness, which was indebted for the necessaries of life to the liberality of nature, rather than to personal exertions. This hatred and jealousy took root in Cain's heart. He beheld the happiness of his brother with the feelings-of an enemy. The joy at the success of his own labors was embittered by the aspect of his brother's greater affluence. How could God look with delight upon an offering which the offerer himself did not regard with unalloyed satisfaction? How could he

encourage by his applause a man whose heart was poisoned by the mean and miserable passion of envy?"

But all this is gratuitous and far-fetched. Cain was not afflicted with so laborious an occupation. Adam supported himself and Eve, and all Cain had to do was to provide himself, and perhaps Abel, with vegetables. Nor could Abel's occupation have been light, for flocks and herds require a good deal of attendance, and in those early days they needed vigilant protection against the ravages of wild beasts. Abel's task must have been quite as heavy as Cain's. Our opinion is that the Lord showed his usual caprice, hating whom he would and loving whom he would. Jehovah acted like the savage hero of Mr. Browning's "Caliban on Setebos," who sprawls on the shore watching a line of crabs make for the sea, and squashes the twentieth for mere variety and sport. If Jehovah is requested to explain his loves and hates, he answers with Shylock, "it is my whim." It was his whim to love Jacob and hate Esau, and it was no doubt his whim to accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's.

Mythologically the acceptance of Abel's offering and the rejection of Cain's are easily intelligible. The principle of sacrifice was deeply imbedded in Judaism. Without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Under the Levitical law the duties of the priesthood chiefly consisted in burning the sin offerings of the people. It is, therefore, not difficult to understand how the Jewish scribes who wrote or revised the Pentateuch after the Babylonish captivity should give this coloring to the narrative of Genesis; nor is it hard to conceive that for centuries before that date the popular tradition had already, under priestly direction, taken such a color, so as to give the oldest and deepest sanction to the doctrine of animal sacrifice.

It must also be noticed that Abel, who found favor with God, was "a keeper of sheep," while Cain, whose offering was contemned, was "a tiller of the ground." This accords with the strongest traditional instincts of the Jews. The Persian religion decidedly favors agriculture, which it regards as a kind of divine service. Brahminism and Buddhism countenance it still more decidedly, and even go to the length of absolutely prohibiting the slaughter of animals. The Jews, on the other hand, esteemed the pastoral life as the noblest, and the Hebrew historian very naturally represented it as protected and consecrated by the blessing of Jehovah, while agriculture was declared to have been imposed on man as apunishment. The nomadic origin of the Jews accounts for their antipathy to that pursuit, which survived and manifested itself, long after they settled in Palestine, devoted themselves to the cultivation of the soil, and enacted agrarian laws. They always esteemed agriculturalists as inferior to shepherds; men of superior attainments in their histories and legends rose from pastoral life; and kings kept their flocks. David, the man after God's own heart, and the national hero of the Jews, was a shepherd, and the Lord came to him while he was keeping his father's sheep. Moses was keeping his father-in-

law's sheep when God appeared to him in the burning bush at Mount Horeb; Jacob kept his uncle Laban's sheep when he fled from Esau; and Abraham, the father of the faithful, was rich in flocks and herds.

To recur to our story. Abel probably enjoyed the conspicuous mark of divine favors conferred on him. Cain, however, experienced very different feelings. He "was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Whereupon the Lord somewhat facetiously asked him what was the matter. "Why," said he, "art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." This was all very well, but as a matter of fact Cain's offering had already beenrejected, and according to the Bible he had done nothing to deserve such harsh treatment.

The Lord's final words on this occasion read thus in our English Bible: "And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." These words are construed as applying to Cain's mastery over Abel, as the elder brother; but they seem quite unmeaning in that connexion; for Abel left no offspring, and the prophecy, if such it were, was never fulfilled. Kalisch throws light on this obscure passage. The Lord, he says, was referring not to Abel but to Cain's secret sin, and the passage should read "And to thee isitsdesire, but thou shalt rule over it."

Cain then "talked with Abel his brother." Gesenius supposes that he communicated to him the words of God, and treats this as the first step towards a reconciliation. However that may be, we hear nothing more of it, for the very next words relate the murder of the younger brother by the elder. "And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

This abrupt narrative certainly requires explanation. Kalisch seems to think that Cain went about his work, after the interview with God, in a better frame of mind; but while he toiled hard "in the field" he became incensed at the sight of Abel loafing under a fine umbrageous tree and calmly watching his flock. Forgetting the divine admonitions, and listening only to the voice of passion, he madly killed his only brother, and made himself the first murderer. The Talmud gives several legends about the hatred between the two brothers. One imputes the difference to Cain's avarice, another to his ambition, another to his innate sinfulness, and another to his envy and jealousy on account of Abel's wife. The last of all seems the truest; namely, that they differed "in their views regarding Providence, the moral government of the world, and the efficacy of virtuous deeds for happiness." This idea informs Byron's tragedy on the subject. In "Cain" the younger, brother's offering is burnt up with supernatural fire, while the elder's altar remains unkindled; whereupon Cain inveighs against God's partiality, and denounces the bloody sacrifice which finds greater favor than his own peaceful tribute of fruit and flowers. He then advances to

scatter the relics of Abel's offering from the altar, but is thwarted by his brother who resists the sacrilege. Abel is felled in the struggle, and Cain, who had no intention of killing him, finds himself an actual murderer before his brother's corpse.

We are bound to conclude that the first quarrel in the world, like nine-tenths of those that have occurred since, was about religion. Cain thought God should be worshiped in one way, Abel thought he should be worshiped in another; and they settled the question, after the manner of religious disputants in all ages, by the stronger knocking the weaker on the head. In religion there is no certitude on this side of the grave; if we are ever destined to know the truth on that subject, we must die to find it out. We may therefore argue fruitlessly until the day of judgment. The only effectual way of settling a religious problem is to settle your opponents.

After the murder the Lord paid Cain another visit, and asked him where Abel was. Cain replied that he was not his brother's keeper and didn't know. He does not appear to have thought God a particularly well informed person. Then the Lord said that Abel's blood cried unto him from the ground. "And now," he continued, "art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth. And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden."

Now let us examine this story. Why was Cain so solicitous about his safety? Why did he fear that everybody would try to kill him? He had slain his brother, and his father and mother were the only people in the world besides himself and perhaps his sisters (? who knew). Kalisch suggests that he apprehended the future vengeance of mankind when the world grew more populous. But how, in that case, could a distinctive mark be any protection? It would publish his identity to all beholders. Besides, one would suppose that Cain, the first man ever born into the world, would always be well known without carrying about a brand like a special wine or a patent edible. And what was the mark? Kalisch thinks it was only a villainous expression. Others think it was the Mongolian type impressed upon the features of Cain, who became the founder of that great division of the human race. A negro preacher started a different theory. When the Lord called out in a loud voice "Cain, where is thy brother Abel," Cain, who was a black man, like Adam, turned pale with fear, and never regained his original color. All his children were pale too; and that, said the preacher, "accounts for de white trash you see ebery war in dese days."

How did Cain manage to go "out from the presence of the Lord," who is everywhere? Satan does the same thing in the Book of Job, and Jonah tries to do it later on. Jehovah was clearly a local as well as a visible God, and not the infinite spirit of the universe.

Where was the land of Nod situated? East of Eden, says the Bible. But nobody knows where Eden was. As we pointed out in "The Creation Story," scores of different positions have been assigned to it. The only point of agreement among the commentators is that it wassomewhere. All that can safely be affirmed, then, is that Nod was east of Somewhere. The name itself is very appropriate. No doubt the Lord was not quite awake in that locality, and hence we may explain how Cain managed to go "out from his presence."

In this strange land of Nod, Cain "knew his wife." Who was she? Probably his own sister, but the Bible does not tell us anything about her. Their first son was called Enoch. Cain then "builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." But this is directly opposed to the curse "a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

Delitzsch notices this, and, as usual, seeks to explain it away. Cain, he says, "in this way set himself against the divine curse, in order to feel it inwardly so much the more, as outwardly he seems to have overcome it." To which we reply—first, that there is no evidence that Cain felt the curse "more inwardly" after he built the city; and, secondly, the idea of a man successfully setting himself against an omnipotent curse is a trifle too absurd for credence or criticism.

Now Adam and Eve, when Cain fled after the murder of Abel, were left childless, or at least without a son. But it was necessary that they should have another, in order that God's chosen people, the Jews, might be derived from a purer stock than Cain's. Accordingly we read that Adam, in his hundred and thirtieth year, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Why was not Cain begotten in the same way? Had he been so, the cradle of the world might not have been defiled with the blood of fratricide. Seth being "the image" of Adam, and Adam "the image" of God, Seth and the Almighty were of course very much alike. He was pious, and from him were descended the pious patriarchs, including Noah, from whom was descended Abraham the founder of the Jewish race. God's chosen people came of a good stock, although they turned out such a bad lot.

From Seth to Noah there are ten Patriarchs before the Flood. This is clearly mythological. The Hindus believed intengreat saints, the offspring of Manu, and intendifferent personifications of Vishnu. The Egyptians hadtenmighty heroes, the Chaldeanstenkings before the Flood, the Assyrianstenkings from Ham to Ninyas, and as many from Japhet to Aram; and Plato

enumeratestensons of Neptune, as the rulers of his imaginary Island of Atlantis, submerged by the Deluge.

Cain's descendants were of course drowned by the Flood, but they did a great deal more for the world than the descendants of pious Seth, who seems to have done little else than trust in God. The Cainites laid the basis of civilisation. One of them Jabal, foundedcattle-keeping; his brother, Jubal, inventedmusical instruments; and their half-brother Tubal-cain first practisedsmithery. Seth's descendants had nothing but piety. Even their morals were no better than those of the Cainites; for at the Flood only eight of them were found worthy of preservations, and they were a poor lot. Noah got beastly drunk after the waters subsided, and one of his three sons brought a curse on all his offspring. What then must we think of the rest?

Tuch excellently explains the mythological significance of the story of Cain and Abel and Seth. "There lies," he says, "in this myth the perfectly correct reminiscence, that in the Eastancientnations lived, under whom in very early times culture and civilisation extended, but at the same time the assertion, that these could not prejudice the renown of the Western-Asiatics, since the prerogatives, which their descent from the first-born would secure to them, were done away through God's Curse, which lighted on their ancestor, Cain. Thus the East is cut off from the following history, and the thread fastened on, which carries us on in Genesis, right across through the nations, to the only chosen people of Israel." The entire history of the world before the Flood is dismissed in five chapters, and that from the Flood to Abraham in two more. After that the mighty antique civilisations are never noticed except so far as they affect the history of the Jews. The ages of the Patriarchs also dwindle down from nine centuries in the beginning to almost the normal longevity in the semi-historical period. Could anything more conclusively prove the mythical character of the narrative?

One of the Patriarchs descended from Seth, namely Enoch, which singularly enough is also the name of Cain's eldest son, never died. We read that "he was not, for God took him." It is about time that the Lord took the whole lot out of his Word, and gave us a little ancienthistoryinstead. We want arevisedBible in the fullest sense of the word. The old book needs to be completely rewritten. How thankful we should all be if the Lord inspiredanother"Moses" to rectify the errors and supplement the deficiencies of the first, and to give us scientific truth instead of fanciful myths about the early history of our race! But the Lord never inspires anybody to do a useful piece of work, and our Darwins will therefore have to go on with their slow and laborious task of making out a history of mankind from the multitudinous and scattered traces that still survive the decay of time.

LOT'S WIFE.

BIBLE ROMANCES.—12.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Lot and his family were a queer lot. Their history is one of the strangest in the whole Bible. They dwelt amongst a people whose debauchery has become a by-word, and in a city which has given a name to the vilest of unnatural crimes. Lot, his wife, and their two unmarried daughters, were the only persons preserved from the terrible fate which Jehovah, in one of his periodic fits of anger, inflicted upon the famous Cities of the Plain. They witnessed a signal instance of his ancient method of dealing with his disobedient children. In the New Testament, God promises the wicked and the unbelievers everlasting fire after they are dead; in the Old Testament, he drowns them or burns them up in this world. Lot and his family saw the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by "brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven"; and they, four persons in all, just half the number that survived the Flood a few centuries before, were the only ones that escaped. God specially spared them. Yet Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt for looking back as she fled from the doomed city, and the old man himself soon after got drunk and committed incest with his daughters. From this crime sprang Moab and Ammon, the founders of two nations who became for many centuries the most implacable enemies of God's chosen people.

Why did the Lord spare these four persons? Why did he not profit by the lesson of the Flood? The eight persons rescued from drowning in that great catastrophe were infected with original sin, and the consequence was that the world peopled from their stock was a great deal worse than the ante-diluvian world. It would clearly have been better to destroy all and start absolutely afresh. The eight rescued persons were apparently just as bad as those who were drowned. So with the four persons spared at the destruction of Sodom. The people of that city could hardly have been much worse than Lot and his children. The Lord appears to have been as stupid in his mercy as he was brutal in his wrath.

Lot was Abraham's nephew, and evidently came of a bad stock. The uncle's evil career will be sketched in our series of "Bible Heroes." For the present we content ourselves with the remark that no good could reasonably be expected from such a family. Lot's father was Haran, a son of Terah, and brother to Abraham.

He "died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees." A city was called by his name in the land of Canaan, and Terah and the family dwelt there after they left Ur, until the patriarch died and Abraham was called out from his kindred to found a new house. The "father of the faithful" took his orphaned nephew with him. Lot accompanied his uncle on the

journey to Egypt, where Abraham passed his wife off as his sister, and showed his natural bent by lying right and left.

Soon afterwards we learn that Abraham and Lot had grown very rich, the former "in cattle, in silver, and in gold," and the latter in "flocks, and herds, and tents." Indeed "their substance was so great that they could not dwell together, and there was strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herd-men of Lot's cattle." Whereupon Abraham said "Don't let us quarrel within the family, but let us part. You can go where you like. If you go to the right I'll go to the left, and if you go to the left I'll go to the right" It was necessary to separate Lot from the fortunes of Abraham, in order that God's dealings with the latter might be uninterrupted and his family kept distinct; and so the Hebrew chronicler very naturally separates them here, in a manner which reflects great credit on Abraham, and exhibits him in a most amiable light.

Cunning Lot took full advantage of the offer. He "lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord." So they parted, and Lot "pitched his tent towards Sodom," whose inhabitants, says our naive story, "were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Commentators explain that Lot's approach to such a detestable sink of iniquity indicated the native corruption of his heart, or at least a sad lack of horror at the sins which made the place stink in the nostrils of God.

In the next chapter we find Lot living in Sodom, although we are not told when he moved there. Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaorner king of Elam, and Tidal "king of nations," made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the "king of Bera, which is Zoar." A great battle was fought in the vale of Siddim, which is alleged to be now covered by the Dead Sea. The four kings were victorious over the five. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and the victors spoiled their cities, taking with them many captives, among whom was "Lot, Abram's brother's son." How Abraham went out with a handful of men, defeated the triumphant forces of the allied kings, and rescued his nephew, is a pretty little story which we reserve for our life of that patriarch. All the other captives were rescued also, and Lot, returning with his friends, continued to dwell in Sodom as before.

We hear no more of him for a considerable time. During the interval Abraham has a child by Hagar. Ishmael, with the rest of the patriarch's household, is circumcised. And finally the Lord visits Abraham again to tell him that, notwithstanding their advanced ages, he and Sarah shall yet have a son. What happened during the interview properly belongs to the life of Abraham, but we shall here consider so much of it as relates to the fortunes of Lot.

The Lord complained that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was "very grievous," and said that the great cry of it had reached him in heaven. Being much concerned about their "goings on," he had resolved to drop down and see for himself if they were realty as bad as he suspected. "If not," said he, "I will know." In the Old Testament, God, who knows everything, is always seeking information.

Abraham surmised that the Lord meant to play the devil with the Sodomites, and he was anxious about Lot who dwelt with them. So he began a parley. "Now, my Lord," said Abraham, "you surely don't mean to destroy indiscriminately; you, the judge of all the earth, must act on the square. Suppose there are fifty righteous men in Sodom, won't you, just for their sake, spare the place?" Knowing that there were nothing like fifty righteous men in Sodom, the Lord promptly acceded to Abraham's-request; so promptly indeed that Abraham smelt a rat, and determined to drive a closer bargain. So he asked the Lord to knock off five. "Very well," was the reply, "if I find forty-five righteous men I'll spare the city." Abraham was still suspicious. He knew that Jehovah loved a bit of destruction, and was not easily moved when he had once made up his mind to indulge himself. So he returned to the charge. "I beg pardon," said he, "for troubling you so, but do you mind knocking off another ten, and making thirty of it?" "Not at all," answered the Lord, "we'll say thirty." Abraham felt there-was something wrong. This amiable readiness to oblige thoroughly perplexed him. If the Lord had haggled over the thirty, he would have known that there was about that number of righteous men in the place; but in the actual condition of affairs, he felt that he had considerably overshot the mark. The-game was very dangerous, but he decided to renew it. "My Lord," he began, "I'm a dreadful bore, but I'm not quite satisfied with our contract and should like to re-open it. I don't wish to be importunate, but will you knock off another ten?" "With all my heart," replied the Lord, "we'll say twenty." Still dissatisfied, Abraham resolved on a final effort. "My good Lord," said he, "this is really the last time of asking. I promise to bother you no more. Will you knock off another ten?" "All right," was the reply, "anything to oblige. Well say ten altogether. If there are so many righteous men in Sodom I'll spare it. Good afternoon, Abraham, good afternoon." And the Lord was off. Abraham ruefully watched the retreating figure, perfectly assured that the Lord had got the best of the bargain, and that he himself had been duped, worsted, and befooled.

God did not go to Sodom himself, but sent two angels to inspect it. They reached its gate in the evening, and found Lot sitting there. In eastern towns the places before the gate are the appointed localities for meetings; and in ancient times they were used for still more extensive purposes. There the judge pronounced his decisions, and even kings held there occasionally their courts of justice; there buying and selling went on; the people assembled there to see each other and hear the news; and almost all public affairs were transacted there, from religious worship to the smallest details of civil life. It is not surprising, therefore, that Lot should be sitting

in the gate when the two strangers arrived at the city. Some commentators have even conjectured that he went out to meet them; but others object that this is contradictory to the narrative, which does not exhibit Lot as recognising the angels, and that it implies "too ideal a notion of its virtue." Some have supposed that Lot had attained to the dignity of a judge, and that he was sitting to act in that capacity on this occasion; but later circumstances refute this supposition; for, in the quarrel which ensued, the people of Sodom reproached him as "a stranger" who set himself up as a judge of their conduct.

Lot advanced to the strangers, greeted them with a profound bow, addressed them as "my lords," and asked them to stay over night at his house, where he would wash their feet, give them something to eat, and find them a bed. They declined his frank hospitality, and said they meant to pass the night in the streets. Kalisch observes, as though he knew all about their motives, that "it was their intention to try his character, and to give him an opportunity of showing whether his generosity was merely a momentary emotion, or had become a settled feature in his character." He also dismisses the idea that they wished to remain in the streets in order to study "the moral state of the Sodomites," as they required no such knowledge, for "they were not only the angels of God, but God himself acted in them." But Kalisch should bear in mind that God told Abraham he was going on purpose to "see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it"; and that, as the angels could not know more than God, it was after all necessary that they should make inquiries. Lot, however, "pressed upon them greatly," and at last they entered his house. He then "made them afeast" which seems to have consisted of nothing but unleavened bread. Perhaps the angels, who had dined heavily with Abraham on veal, butter, and milk, were afraid of bad dreams, and only wanted a light supper before going to roost.

They were not, however, destined to enjoy a good night's sleep. Before they "lay down," the men of Sodom "compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, "Where are the men which came in unto thee this night? Bring them out unto us, that we may know them."

We are reluctant to criticise this dirty story, but duty compels us. God's Word is full of disgusting narratives, and if we scrupled to examine them we should have to leave the book alone. We have no love of filth, and if the Bible were not held up as a divine work we should never condescend to notice its beastly tales of fornication, adultery, sodomy, and incest.

Why didallthe men of Sodom, both old and young, flock to Lot's house? Is it likely thateverymale in the city, past the age of puberty, should burn with unnatural lust at one and the same time? Did they suppose thatallof them could abuse the two strangers? The story is as silly as it is nasty.

For a parallel to Lot's answer to the demand of his neighbors we must go to the nineteenth chapter ofJudges, where the men of Gibeah clamor for the Levite as the men of Sodom clamor for the two angels, and where his host offers them instead his own daughter as well as the Levite's concubine. A woman's honor was a very trivial thing to God's chosen people. In itself it counted as next to nothing. The man's right of possession gave it all its importance and worth.

Lot went out and shut the door after him. Then he rebuked his neighbors for desiring to do "so wickedly," and immediately made them an offer which he seems to have thought perfectly fair and square. "Behold, now," he said, "I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof." The laws of hospitality are sacred, and Lot did well to maintain them; but he had no right to sacrifice to them a still more sacred law. Instead of strenuously opposing the committal of one crime, he proposes another as heinous.

The Sodomites scorned his offer. They had apenchantfor a different pleasure. Ravishing virgins was not in their line. So they reviled Lot for setting himself up as a judge amongst them, called him "fellow," threatened to deal worse with him than with the strangers, and actually pressed so sore upon him that they "came near to break the door."

Then the strangers manifested their power. They "put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut too the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great; so that they wearied themselves to find the door." However blind they were surely they might have found the door by feeling for it. Kalisch makes this episode more reasonable by substituting "blind confusion" for "blindness."

The angels continued to act promptly. They informed Lot that they intended to destroy the place because of its sin, and told him to gather all his family together and leave at once. Lot spoke to his "sons-in-law, which married his daughters," but they appear to have thought him daft. Early in the morning "the angels hastened Lot" who still lingered. They laid hold of his hand, his wife's, and his two unmarried daughters', led them outside the city, and said, "Escape now for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountains lest thou be consumed." Lot did not relish this prospect of a hard climb. He therefore asked the angels to let him flee unto the city of Zoar, because it was near and "a little one." That is what the servant girl said to her mistress when she produced an illegitimate child, "please 'm its only a very little one." She thought that a small illegitimate baby wasn't as bad as a big illegitimate baby, and Lot thought that a little wicked city wasn't as bad as a big wicked city.

Lot's request was granted, and he was told to look sharp. He made good speed, and reached Zoar when "the sun was risen."

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." It is a mistake to suppose that brimstone and fire are characteristic of hell, for the Lord evidently keeps a large stock of those commodities in heaven. Nor must it be supposed that Lot was spared because he was righteous. He was spared because the Lord "was merciful unto him." His virtues, Kalisch remarks, were not sufficient for his salvation, which he owed to "the piety of Abraham." Abraham may have had "piety" enough to save a Lot, but he had scarcely "virtue" enough to save a mouse.

Kalisch says that "about the situation of Zoar there remains little doubt." He identifies it with "the considerable ruins found in Wady Kerek, on the eastern side of the Dead Sea." But he has no such assurance as to the situation of Sodom. He deprecates De Saulcy's assumption, that Sodom is traceable in the heap of stones found near the Salt Mountain, Udsum; and adds—"We may hope rather than expect, that authentic ruins of the four destroyed towns will ever be discovered. Biblical historians and prophets already speak of them as localities utterly and tracelessly swept away; and the remark of Josephus, that 'shadows' of them still existed in his time, is vague and doubtful."

In the South of Palestine there is an extraordinary lake of mysterious origin. It is about thirty-nine miles long, and from eight to twelve miles broad. It is fed by the river Jordan, and drained by the evaporation of a fierce and terrible sun. Its water is clear and inodorous, but nauseous like a solution of alum; it causes painful itching and even ulceration on the lips and if brought near a wound, or any diseased part, produces a most excruciating sensation. It contains muriatic and sulphuric acid, and one-fourth of its weight is salt. No fishes live in it; and according to tradition, which however is not true, birds that happen to fly over its surface die. Near it is said to grow the Apple of Sodom, beautiful in appearance, but containing only ashes. This lake is appropriately called the Dead Sea.

The natives say that at low water they glimpse fragments of buildings and pillars rising out of the bottom of the lake. But this is only a fancy. Yet beneath the waters of the Dead Sea are thought to lie the Cities of the Plain. The northern part of the lake is very deep, the southern part very shallow. The bottom consists of two separate plains, one elevated, the other depressed. The latter is by some held to be the original bottom of the lake, and the former to have been caused by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But this also is only a fancy. The bitumen, which is found in such large quantities in and near the lake, is a symptom and remnant of the volcanic

nature of the region. Several lines of earthquake are traced from it in a north-eastern direction; and it is conjectured that the three lakes, Merom, Tiberias, and Asphaltites, together with the river Jordan, are the remaining traces of the huge gulf once filled by the Dead Sea before the land was lifted by a geological catastrophe. Volcanic action has caused all the remarkable phenomena of the district, which were of immemorial antiquity thousands of years ago; and the story of the Cities of the Plain is only one of the legends which ancient peoples associated with every striking aspect of nature.

Let us recur to Lot. His sons, his married daughters, and their husbands, perished in the deluge of brimstone and fire. He and his two unmarried daughters fled to Zoar as fast as their legs could carry them. But his wife was less fortunate. She ran behind Lot, and with the natural curiosity of her sex she looked back on the doomed city. For this violation of the angels' orders she was turned into "a pillar of salt." Some commentators try to blink this unpleasant fact by artful translations; such as "she fell into a salt-brook," or "she was covered with a salt crust," or she was "likea pillar of salt." Josephus pretended to have seen this old woman of salt, but others have been less lucky, although many travellers and pilgrims have searched for it as for a sacred relic. But let us not despair. Lot's wife may yet be discovered and exhibited in the British Museum.

What became of Lot and his daughters? Fearing to dwell in Zoar, they left it and "dwelt in a cave." The damsels, who had heard their father offer them to the promiscuous embrace of a lustful crowd, could not be expected to be very scrupulous in their conduct. They were alone, without husbands to make them mothers, and to be childless was a calamity and a reproach; so they put their heads together and devised a nasty scheme. Two nights successively they made their father blind drunk, and got him to commit incest with them. This is very beastly and very absurd. Lot wasold; he was so drunk that he knew nothing of what happened; yet he got two virgins with child! The porter in "Macbeth" would have laughed at such a ridiculous story.

These improper females were by no means ashamed of their action; on the contrary, they boast of their bastards; and the historian does not utter a word in condemnation of their crime.

Lot was the father of his own grandchildren; his daughters were the mothers of their own brothers; and his other children were destroyed by heavenly brimstone and fire. Were they not, as we said at the outset, a queer lot? But the queerest lot was Lot's wife. Whatever may be said of the rest of the family, no one can say that she was not worth her salt, for the Lord thought she was worth enough to make a pillar. Let us hope that the old lady will some day be (un)covered, and that her pillar of salt may yet, to the confusion of sceptics, stand as a veritable pillar in the house of God, and there defy the attacks of all the infidel Samsons, world without end. Amen.

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THEISM OR ATHEISM:

WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

MR. W. T. LEE
(Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society)

AND

MR. G. W. FOOTE
(President of the National Secular Society)

HELD IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, DERBY, MAY 15 AND 16, 1895

CHAIRMAN: J. W. PIPER, ESQ.
(Editor of "The Derby Daily Telegraph")

Revised by Both Disputants

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THEISM OR ATHEISM:

WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE?

FIRST NIGHT.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—Allow me, in the first place, to express my indebtedness to the members of the local committee who are charged with the management of this meeting, for having bestowed upon me the compliment of inviting me to preside over this meeting. In the next place, I should like to assure you of the deep sympathy I feel in every honest effort to get at the truth with regard to matters vitally affecting the peace of mind and happiness of the people. Believe me, I have as little sympathy or patience with the gay trifler who, referring to matters of this importance, insists that ignorance is bliss, as I have with those persons who blindly take their orders from the priests and from the bookmen. Let me again frankly admit that I have little sympathy with a reckless and indiscriminate discussion on topics of this sacred character; I hold that the truth can best be arrived at, and a satisfactory solution of difficulties best secured, by temperate and orderly discussion. Happily for us to-night, we are surrounded by all the elements of profitable debate. The contending champions are gentlemen of acknowledged ability, and, I believe, of sterling honesty of purpose. In Mr. Lee—(loud applause)—we have a powerful and high-minded expo-

nent of orthodoxy, who has acquitted himself well upon many a field of controversy; and in his opponent we have one well qualified to meet him. (Cheers.) I can, perhaps, pay Mr. Foote no higher compliment than to say he has been deemed worthy by his fellow-thinkers to succeed an eminent orator and statesman, one whose acquaintance I was proud to make and enjoy—I refer to the late Charles Bradlaugh. Well, these friends of ours have mutually agreed to discuss a certain topic, which, as you all know, is thus described: "Theism or Atheism: Which is the more reasonable?" and, in doing so, they have undertaken to be bound by certain conditions; and perhaps, at this point, I cannot better consult your convenience and your information than by reading some of the more salient parts of the arrangements which have been drawn up:—

> Mr. Lee to open the first night, Mr. Foote the second. Order of debate: (*a*) Opener to speak for thirty minutes; (*b*) his opponent to speak for thirty minutes. Each to speak twice for fifteen minutes after. All the local business arrangements to be made by the joint committee at Derby.

There are other points, which, for obvious reasons, I need not trouble you with.

I have now to say, ladies and gentlemen, that you will not elicit from me any critical opinion with regard to the selected topic of discussion; throughout this debate I shall carefully abstain from making any such observations. I hope to prove to your satisfaction that, in undertaking this duty, I have been actuated by a desire to observe the strictest impartiality; and, with this end in view, I very confidently appeal to you for assistance and support. Let us listen with the utmost patience and consideration to what both our friends have to say, and let us be careful not to indulge in any act, however slight, which may have a tendency to irritate or to distract them.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have only to express the hope that this discussion throughout may be characterised, both on the part of the disputants and on the part of the audience, with good temper, so that we may hope for profitable and useful results. In accordance with arrangement, I propose sounding a bell three minutes before the expiration of the allotted time to each speaker—you will quite understand what that signifies—and again at the completion of the allotted time.

I will now, then, in accordance with arrangements made, ask Mr. Lee to open the real business of this debate.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The question we have met to discuss will necessitate the use of four very important words. These words I propose defining as follows: First, by the word "universe" I mean the sum-total of all conditioned existence. Second, by the term "reasonable" I understand what is in accordance with the logical demands of the mind. Third, by the word "Atheism" I understand that doctrine which rejects the idea that the universe was produced by a Being called God, and, in denying His existence, goes on to show that the universe is eternal, or is the necessary outcome of the necessary working of the substance it calls matter, and speaks of as eternal. Fourth, the term "Theism," the name of that doctrine which regards the universe as the consciously-willed production of the unoriginated Being, who is absolute in wisdom and power, who was before all things, and by whom, and in whom, all things exist and consist. This Being is spoken of by Theists as God.

These being my definitions, I must ask Mr. Foote to accept them as true, or to show them to be untrue by appealing to the great masters of lexicography, whose business it is to treat of the origin, history, and meaning of words. This is due to me, his opponent, and also to you, our judges.

Having defined our terms, the question naturally arises, Which is the more reasonable doctrine—Atheism, which denies God, or Theism, which affirms God? I assert, and shall seek to prove, that the Theistic doctrine of the universe is essentially reasonable, because it can be vindicated by lines of argument and processes of reasoning admittedly trustworthy in other fields of inquiry, and therefore to be taken as reliable in this; and, further, I fearlessly assert that Atheism, as a doctrine of the universe, is utterly unsatisfactory, being opposed to every accepted process of inductive reasoning, violating the laws of scientific inquiry, rejecting the fundamental deliveries of our consciousness, and outraging the collective testimony of all the progressive races of the earth.

Having cleared the ground, let us proceed to the argument, the first proposition of which stands thus: The fact of present existence necessitates the further fact—eternal existence. To put our argument in a simple way, we will place it thus: Something now exists; hence something must have existed always, because out of nothing comes nothing; therefore something must be eternal. To put this another way, all thinkers agree that something must be eternal—that is, there must be something which is underived, unconditioned; something which always has been and for ever will be—an eternal, self-existent substance. This position I think Mr. Foote will admit without discussion; I shall, however, regard it as a favour if he will say definitely whether this supposition is so or not. Taking it that Mr. Foote and I agree as to the eternity of something, the question arises, What is this something? Is it the universe, or is it the matter which composes the universe, or is it something different from both?

This brings me to my second proposition—that neither the universe, nor the matter composing the universe, is the eternal substance for which we seek. To those who are acquainted with the trend of the most advanced science

this proposition will sound like a truism; but in this debate we must take nothing for granted; therefore it is clearly my duty to prove, as it will be clearly Mr. Foote's duty to analyse, and, if possible, disprove, the proposition which I now advance. Until this is done, nothing will be gained by Mr. Foote, nothing will be lost by me. I assert, then, that the universe is not the eternal existence for which we seek, because the universe has not always existed. There was a time when this universe was not; a time when this earth, the sun, and all the orbs of heaven were non-existent; a time when the substance of all material things existed in a highly-attenuated and gaseous state. And not only are we scientifically sure that this universe has not eternally existed —we are equally certain it will come to an end. For, just as our world is slowly but certainly approaching the sun, so all the moving bodies of the sidereal heavens are making for a common centre; every star and sun is getting cooler, and energy, in the form of heat, is being dissipated, and an end to the universe must be acknowledged.

Under these circumstances, to speak of the universe being eternal, as Professor Haeckel does, is to lay one's self open to the slashing reply of Herbert Spencer: "Haeckel is unphilosophical; it is the indestructibility of force and the eternity of motion which are *a priori* truths, transcending both demonstration and experience."

But I expect before this debate closes to have the pleasure of showing that Herbert Spencer is as unscientific as Haeckel.

We must, then, admit, from numerous scientific facts and inductions from them, that our universe has not always existed; and, if this universe is not eternal, its present existence must be an effect due to some cause. But what do we mean by the term "cause," and what by the word "effect"? By the former we understand something which really exists, something which has power, something which has power enough to account for the existence or happening

of any given thing; by the latter we mean the happening of any event, or, to be more correct, by the word "effect" we connote anything for the existence of which some outside efficiency is demanded. With these definitions before me I assert that matter is not the cause of the universe, and I further assert that Atheism is grossly unreasonable when it speaks of matter as the cause of the universe, for matter fails to account for its own existence. We take a parcel of matter in our hands, and we find it to be made up of parts; we examine those parts, and find them to be made up of other parts; we continue our analysis until our senses are no longer of any avail. Here science comes to our aid with keener methods of investigation, until at last we get to the atom, the ultimate condition of matter. But, having found the atom, have we discovered the cause of the universe? Nay, for these atoms need as much explanation as does the sun in the heavens. A great scientist has told us that these ultimate bodies are of definite form and incompressible; they continue to this day as when first formed, perfect in number, measure, and weight. I am not surprised, therefore, that Sir J. F. W. Herschel and Professor Clerk-Maxwell should say that these atoms bear all the marks of being "manufactured articles." I, therefore, conclude that the universe is not eternal, and that matter is not the cause of the universe, because it not only fails to account for its own existence, but, in its ultimate particles, witnesses to the existence of a wise and powerful being, to whom it stands related as effect to cause.

But I can imagine Mr. Foote saying: "I do not accept Clerk-Maxwell or Herschel's theory of matter; I believe all matter is eternal in duration and infinite in extension, and I, therefore, feel justified in conceiving it to be the substance of all substances and the cause of all causes." Now, Mr. Foote will excuse me if I say he cannot possibly conceive of matter as eternal or infinite, and he will also excuse me if I say that, apart from the ordinary conception of matter

as a vehicle of energy with the two attributes extension and inertia, he cannot conceive of matter at all.

Let us see how the Atheistic position is stated, and then how much this position is worth.

Professor Haeckel, the high priest of Monism, tells us that the universe is both eternal and infinite, and that matter and motion, inseparable from matter, remain eternal and indestructible. Now, you will remember what Herbert Spencer said about the statement of Haeckel's—he said it was utterly unphilosophical; and now we will prove this statement of Herbert Spencer's to be true, for, "if matter be infinite in extension, the universe must be full of matter, and if the universe be full of matter, there can be no attractive force; every spot being equally full, no particle can draw closer to another, and there can be no rotatory motion, for there would be no reason for turning one way more than another, neither would there be any primitive heat, for heat is motion, and no change of place is possible in a plenum where no particle has any place to move into that is not already full." So, then, matter fails to explain itself, while, if it be infinite, motion and the origination of the universe become philosophically impossible. Atheism, then, fails to explain the existence of matter and the possibility of motion, and, failing here, it must fail everywhere; for, if it cannot account for matter, how shall it account for life? If it fails to account for motion, how shall it account for mind? If it fails to explain the atom, how can it explain the universe? If it fails to account for motion, how can it account for that mighty power of human reason which climbs the starry stairs of the universe and reads the history of stars and suns, projects itself into the very heart of things, and then confesses the presence of a power greater than itself, and a reason higher than its own? (Applause.)

Thus far, then, we have shown Atheism to be utterly unreasonable as a doctrine of the universe, and that it always gets more into each succeeding effect than can be

found in the alleged preceding cause. It begins with matter and ends with mind; it starts with inertia and rises to motion; from motion it passes to life, from life to thought, from thought to what?—the grave; thus it begins and ends with dust.

Now what have we accomplished? We have seen, first, there must be an eternal substance; second, that this eternal substance must be different from matter, and in the last analysis the cause of the universe—in other words, we have shown that, since something now is, something must be eternal; we have shown that this eternal something is not the universe, and cannot be the matter of which the universe is composed. It must, then, be something other than the universe, something other than matter. What that something is we can tell to this extent—it is a real existence; for if it were not, there would be no existence: it must have real power; for if it had not, there would be no existence except itself. These two facts, then, are certain—the existence of an eternal substance, the possession of power by this substance.

Now, having established these two facts, we have also established a third fact, and that fact is as follows. Since there must be an eternal substance, and this eternal substance must have power, this eternal substance must be the cause by which the sum-total of conditioned existence has been brought into being. No amount of mental analysis or argument will enable us to get rid of this third fact.

We now proceed to our next proposition—that this universe is the manifestation of power directed by intelligence. "Now, the result of our whole experience seems to amount to this—there are but two ways in which we have observed the different forms of matter to be thrown together, either at random or with design and purpose. By the former we have never seen produced a regular complicated effect corresponding to a certain end; by the second we uniformly have. If, then, the works of nature and the productions of

men resemble each other in this one general characteristic, will not this experience warrant us in ascribing to both a similar, though, of course, a proportionate, cause?" Admit the facts, and the induction from the facts is amply justified. But the question naturally arises, Do the facts of nature agree with the productions of men in the manifestation of aim, intention, purpose? I believe they do, and here are my reasons for so believing. Whatever our theory of the origin of the universe may be, we must admit that the earth, the sea, and the sky are full of beauty. From far-off space, where the unresolved nebulæ float, in all the millions and millions of suns and systems of suns which glitter in the brow of night, and here, even in this tiny speck we call our world, order is everywhere manifested, order everywhere known. In the midst of numberless varieties there is a deep-seated unity, vast worlds and systems of worlds, the marshalled battalions of heaven, alongside of which our earth and our planets are as nothing, are rolling through space in orbits millions and millions of times greater than that of our solar system; but everywhere the same laws of gravitation, the same laws of light, of heat, of motion, are found. From speck of dust to blazing sun and floating nebulæ, order and law everywhere prevail. But order and law are the manifestation of power guided by intelligence. Nowhere do we discover order and law apart from intelligence, and, therefore, I hold that the cause of the universe must not only have power, but also mind and intelligence. (Cheers.) To put this another way, one great irrefutable fact of the universe is this, it is a gigantic intelligible unity, all its laws are mathematical relations, and can be expressed in mathematical formula. This is undoubtedly true of the law of gravitation, and of chemical combinations, the law of colour and of music, the facets of crystals, the pistils of flowers, the feathers of birds. Now, I put this question to Mr. Foote. If it takes the intellect of a Copernicus, a Kepler, and a Newton years upon years of anxious study to

formulate a few of the mathematical relations and laws of the heavens; if it takes the life-long investigation of men like Owen, and Darwin, and Flower to state the laws of comparative anatomy; if it takes thinkers like Huxley, and Allman, and Weismann to understand the laws of biological science; if it takes experimenters like Pritchard and Stokes to discover the laws of optics—I say, if it takes minds like these and intellects such as those of Faraday, of Balfour Stewart, of Tait, Kelvin, Rayleigh, and thousands of others we could name, to explain a few of the laws and mathematical relations of the universe, what mind, what intellect, must it have taken to have planned the whole universe, and then to have realised the plan in this beautiful, orderly universe? (Applause.) I ask Mr. Foote, Could matter have done this, could matter and undirected motion have done this? I say nay, a thousand times nay. Mere matter and undirected motion have never been known to make a child's toy or a mud pie, and it is flying in the face of all experience and all the verified processes of scientific investigation, as well as a gross insult to our common sense, to ask us to believe that matter and undirected motion have originated the wonderful mechanism which we call our universe. (Applause.)

But I have not done. This universe is an intelligible universe; it can be understood. Now, from a child I have always been taught that it is impossible to get out of a thing that which it does not contain. Very well. I study the stars, and I get thought out of them; I study the rocks, and I get thought out of them; I study the sea, and I get thought out of it; I study the manifold forms of living things on this earth, and I get thought out of them. Now, evolution, we are told, cannot exceed involution; if, then, thought can be got out of the universe, thought must have been put into the universe by the cause which has produced the universe; and, if thought was put into the universe by the cause of the universe, that cause must have been intelli-

gent, or it could not have put thought into the universe. Thus our third proposition is established; this universe is the manifestation of power directed by intelligence. In others words, we have proved these four facts—first, the existence of an eternal substance; second, the possession of power by this substance; third, that this eternal substance is the cause of the universe; and, lastly, that the order, law, purpose, intention manifested in nature are a proof that the cause of the universe is possessed not only with power, but with intelligence. In so far as these propositions are established, in so far is Theism shown to be true, and in proportion to the proof of the Theistic doctrine of the universe is the Atheistic doctrine disproved.

And now I come to my fourth proposition—that the facts of man's mental, moral, and religious nature cannot be explained on the principles of Atheism, but are easily accounted for by the doctrines of Theism. Every man has, in his own consciousness (the mind's knowledge of its own states) the evidence of the existence of mind; in other words, all of us are conscious of ourselves—we know we exist, and we know we think. We also know that the mind is altogether other than the body; in a word, that mind and matter are not only distinct, but different substances, manifesting themselves to us by sets of different and totally incompatible attributes. If Mr. Foote denies this, I must ask him to show that the attributes of mind and matter are alike. Until this is done, we shall continue to believe that we have two sets of incompatible attributes; and, when we find that this belief is not peculiar to ourselves, but is held in some form by all the peoples of the earth, we not only feel that our belief is justified, but we believe that it brings us into the presence of a fact which calls for explanation; and we turn to those who hold the Atheistic position, and ask, How is the existence of this thinking substance, which we call self, to be accounted for? That it has not always existed is undeniable; and, if it began to be, it

must have a cause other than itself. That cause cannot be the self of the parents, for that also is an effect; it began to be. Now, if the soul, or the self, cannot be accounted for by derivation in an unending series of steps from those who preceded us, neither can it be conceived of as the product of physical forces, or combinations of such forces. We must, then, conclude that our selves owe their existence to Him whose wisdom and power are manifested in the heavens and the earth, and in the mind of man.

Deny this, and I demand that I shall have answers given to these questions: First, how shall we account for man being in possession of powers of intellect which are capable of limitless expansion, and also a desire for knowledge that is never satisfied? How do you account for man having a capacity for happiness which nothing in the whole world or the whole universe can meet? How do you account for man having aspirations for the true, the holy, and the eternal, if there be no true, no holy, no eternal? (Applause.) But man is not only sure he exists, and that he thinks; he is conscious of a moral sense, a power by which he perceives some things to be right and others to be wrong; and no man can will that to be right which his conscience tells him is wrong; neither can any man argue himself into the conviction that he has done right when his conscience tells him he has done wrong. Thus, our consciences possess an authority which is above our reason and our will, and therefore could not have been derived from either of these, and must therefore be something imposed upon us, and to which we are required to be conformed by an authority out of ourselves. This authority cannot be man, neither can it be society; it must, then, be something higher than man and stronger than society; in other words, it must be that strong and wise Being who is the moral Dispenser of the universe. Thus, as with mind, so with morals, God becomes the great and necessary postulate. If this be so with mind and morals, how much more must it be so with the religious sense?

I shall stop by submitting to my friend a few questions, and the first is this: What is the substance of which this universe is composed? How could an ordered universe arise from an unordered state of physical units? How could an intelligible universe arise out of a mindless physical condition? How could an universe manifesting law have arisen from a condition where no law can be found? How could an universe without a moral nature produce beings with a moral nature? How could a number of elementary substances called atoms have produced the unity everywhere manifested in nature? How could life, the power which moulds and builds up organisms, and preserves them from the disintegrating influences which act on mere matter, have been produced from the non-living? And, in the last place, how could a universe which, according to Atheism, excludes the possibility of God have produced a number of beings, the very flower of that universe, who have become thoroughly persuaded there is a God? (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have now, ladies and gentlemen, to bespeak, on the part of Mr. Foote, the same conscientious attention that you have given to his opponent, Mr. Lee.

Mr. FOOTE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lee, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It would be absurd for me to assume that anything more than an encouraging percentage of this audience was in any kind of agreement with my ideas; and as Mr. Lee, in his otherwise extremely temperate speech, was good enough to say that the Atheistic position was an outrage on human intelligence, I must warn you, if that be correct, that I am likely to say things which will be regarded as an outrage on human intelligence. (Laughter and cheers.) You will, therefore, from that point of view, grant me the indulgence which we always expect from an educated, an intelligent, and honest English audience. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Lee has, in his own opinion, established a large number of propositions; and, not satisfied with that, he wound up with an equally large number of questions, every one of those questions involving a statement and an argument. Now, I am not so young a debater as to fall into a trap of that kind. If any gentleman wants me to answer, upon the spur of the moment, a large number of questions, which he reads off as rapidly as he can during the last minute or two of a speech, he has altogether taken a false measure of human capacity. No, I am not going to do anything of the kind. Mr. Lee would have a perfect right, if we were discussing on the Socratic method, to ask as many questions as he pleased. But he speaks for half an hour, and I do the same. He sets up one position, and I attack it; to-morrow night he will have the same opportunity of attacking me, and I do not intend to-night to occupy the defensive for the greater ease of Mr. Lee in opposition.

Now, then, let us see what Mr. Lee's speech really comes to. He says that the universe is the sum-total of all conditioned existence. Let me ask him if he has any experience of unconditioned existence. When he has informed me of the extent of his experience in that direction, I will continue the discussion as to what may be outside of the universe, which is a conditioned existence. For my own part, I say frankly that I know absolutely nothing of any existence which is not conditioned; nor have I ever met with any person who had any first-hand knowledge of unconditioned existence; and, until unconditioned existence is established as a fact, I decline the responsibility of either accounting for it or arguing about it.

Mr. Lee said that what was reasonable was what conformed to the demands of human intelligence. I listened with profound attention, but could not see any more in the explanation than in the term; so that we come, at the finish, to "what is reasonable is reasonable," and with that I cordially concur.

In the next place, Mr. Lee was good enough, not only to define Theism, but to define Atheism, and in a fashion which suited himself. When this debate was being arranged, it was suggested that the proposition for discussion should be, "Theism or Atheism: Which is the more reasonable theory of the universe?" and Mr. Lee is quite well aware that I insisted upon the words "theory of the universe" being struck out, because Atheism *per se* does not affirm a theory of the universe. An Atheist like the late Charles Bradlaugh may affirm, as a personal thinker, his theory of the universe; but Atheism *per se* simply means, not denial, but rejection, in the sense of not accepting the Theistic theory of the universe which Mr. Lee has put forward to-night. I suppose everybody will admit that Charles Bradlaugh, whose name was mentioned in such honourable terms by our Chairman, was an eminent, and, in a certain sense, a typical, Atheist. When I am told that I must go to the lexicographers for a definition of terms, I reply that I decline to do anything of the sort. Lexicographers all work on their own individual responsibility. Webster will define a word in one way, Richardson in another, Latham in another; and how can I accept the meaning of important terms on the authority of these conflicting lexicographers? If I want to know what is Christianity, I am bound to find out what Christians mean by the term; if I want to know what Buddhism is, I am bound to have the term explained by Buddhists; and if Mr. Lee wants to know what Atheism is, for the purpose of discussion, he must discover what Atheists themselves mean by that term. Now, Charles Bradlaugh, in the very first sentence of his pamphlet, *Is there a God?* says: "The initial difficulty is in defining the word God. It is equally impossible to intelligently affirm or deny any proposition unless there is at least an understanding on the part of the affirmer or denier of the meaning of every word used in the proposition. To me, the word God, standing alone, is a word without meaning." I endorse

every word of that sentence. Take another passage from the same Charles Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism*. He says: "The Atheist does not say there is no God; but he says, I know not what you mean by God; I am without your idea of God. The word God, to me, is a sound, conveying no real or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the belief of which, by its affirmer, is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me. If, however, God is defined to me as an existence other than the existence of which I am a mode, then I deny God, and affirm that it is impossible such God can be." Thus, the Atheist's position is not an absolute denial of any conceivable God; it is the denial of any God so defined as to be in contradiction to the indisputable facts of nature and human nature. I say that Mr. Lee cannot define a God so that I cannot furnish denials and contradictions in the daily and hourly experience of all sentient and intelligent beings upon this planet. It is so easy to talk large, loose metaphysical phrases. Do you imagine that you are going to get a deity that can figure as an object of worship to the masses of the people upon this planet by such involved syllogistical reasoning as Mr. Lee has adopted to-night? Men in this world never believe in the existence of God upon grounds like these. If you ask an ordinary man in the street why he believes in God, do you think he will give you any of those reasons that Mr. Lee has elaborated in his written paper? Nothing of the kind. Those are not the reasons that induce any man to believe in God; those are the reasons that are resorted to for clinging to the belief when it is attacked by human intelligence. The belief in God did not *originate* in the action of human intelligence, fairly and wisely applied to the facts of life. All the religions of to-day originated in ancient times, and those religions of ancient times had their progenitors in lower systems that preceded them; in short, the most elaborate religions of to-day are only, as it were, new weavings

of the old raw material of theology, or, as I should call it, superstition. There is, in this respect, even in modern days, nothing new; it is but a fresh presentation of old material in a new form. The masses of the people never believe religion upon grounds of reason, but upon grounds of authority and early education. The grounds of argument are only adopted by the apologists of religion when they are hard pressed by the critics of religion. (Applause.)

I deny, therefore, that Atheism *per se* denies the existence of God; I deny that Atheism *per se* affirms the eternity of matter; and I decline to accept responsibility for any theory of the universe. I tell Mr. Lee that, notwithstanding his ability, his mind is not large enough to comprehend the universe—("Oh, oh")—or to formulate a satisfactory theory about it. Further, I say that there is *no* intelligence on this earth adequate to form a satisfactory theory of the universe. And why? Because, in the very language which Mr. Lee has employed, infinity is predicated; and how can the mind of man, which is admittedly finite, formulate a satisfactory theory of an infinite existence? The thing is a contradiction in terms—(applause)—and it is no insult to Mr. Lee to say that his powers are inadequate to an infinite task. (Hear, hear.)

I noticed that Mr. Lee fell into, what seemed to me, at any rate, a confusion about the universe. He spoke of the universe and of the matter composing it. Are they two distinct things? The universe simply means the whole, and the whole is made up of what composes it. You cannot have the universe separate, and the matter which composes it separate. The universe is simply a term for the total quantity of its composition. When Mr. Lee said that this universe was not eternal, he took an illustration from our solar system. Does Mr. Lee mean, because there is a dissipation of energy from our planet, that energy is lost? Does Mr. Lee mean, if a planet should ultimately, in some sidereal cataclysm, become broken and scattered through

what he calls the universe, that it is lost? All its component matter would exist after the shock as well as before; and, if planets are not eternal, which no astronomer ever thought of asserting, nevertheless the matter of which all planets are composed appears to be eternal. Mr. Lee may say it is not, but I defy Mr. Lee's mind or any mind to realise and prove the statement that this universe is not eternal. (Applause.)

We then come to this supposed Creator, and we come, in conjunction with this, to the atoms which Mr. Lee's authority says bear all the marks of manufacture. I have heard that before, and it may pass as a metaphorical expression; but we must have logical propositions in debate. One would think that somebody had seen an atom and handled it. Well, nobody has ever done anything of the kind. An atom is an hypothetical existence; that is, it cannot be demonstrated to the senses; and, when a man says that an atom bears marks of manufacture, it is really only another way of stating his own opinion that atoms were created. But it cannot be proved that these atoms have such characteristics, because nobody has ever seen them.

Now, we come to this point—that there was a mind that created matter. Mr. Lee thinks it very curious that anybody should start with matter and reach to mind. I think it is still more curious that you should start with mind and reach to matter. I can understand the process of evolution through perpetual differentiation, climbing to higher and higher stages of organic existence; but I cannot understand your perfect mind producing an imperfect universe, which has existed ever since he created it, and seems to be no better now than it was the very moment he started it. (Applause.) If matter cannot produce mind, I ask you how you arrive at the opposite view that mind can produce matter? I deny that there is any analogy in human experience to justify the assumption that *mind* can *create*. The only mind of which we have any knowledge is our own;

and, if you predicate a mind in the universe outside ours, you must either endow it with the essential powers of our own mind, or you must give some reason for believing that it belongs to an entirely separate category of intelligence. Now, I ask anyone to inquire of himself what he knows of creation. We say the poet creates, the artist creates. But *what* does he create? He does not produce something out of nothing. He works with matter that existed before he was born, and will exist after he is dead. He changes matter from one combination into another, but he cannot create an atom of matter, and he cannot destroy an atom of matter. I, therefore, say the term creation, in the metaphysical sense of producing absolutely out of nothing, or out of something discrete, is, to my mind, utterly unintelligible; and I cannot possibly accept what conveys no reality to my own intelligence.

Mr. Lee says that the Atheist begins with matter and ends with mind. Then he talks about the grave, and says the Atheist begins with dust and ends with dust. But we all have to pass through the same stages of being. Mr. Lee was born as I was; Mr. Lee will die as I shall, for the age of miracles has passed. What is the use of complaining of the Atheist, when the Theist has to go through exactly the same career? You may tell me, of course, that after you are dead something very agreeable is going to happen to you; but I will wait until I know it before I assume it as a fact which should serve as the basis of a discussion.

We came eventually to that something which was the cause of this material universe, and that something is intelligent, and that something is eternal; that is, this something eternally existed before it made up its mind to create the material universe. Has Mr. Lee any idea of what could have occurred to put a new thought into an infinite mind? Why, an infinite mind must live in an infinite now. Being infinite, there is neither past, present, nor future to it; for

these terms are terms of conditioned existence in time and space. How, then, could this eternal being have begun to change? How could it have woke up, so to speak, to the necessity of creating matter? And out of what was that matter created? All that existed before its creation was God; there was no room for anything else; for by the terms of the argument this God is infinite and eternal. Then out of what was the matter created? for out of nothing could come nothing. What comes out of anything must be concrete with it, and, as matter is asserted to be a distinct substance altogether from mind, I want Mr. Lee, on his own hypothesis, to tell me how it was that mind could create something utterly discrete from itself, as he says his God did when he produced the universe?

This ultimate power is directed, says Mr. Lee, by intelligence, and he believes there are only two possible alternatives—either things happen at random, or with design and purpose. I do not accept either view, but hold that a third is conceivable, which Mr. Lee might easily have included; and that is, that things occur according to the inherent properties of the elements that participate in the occurrence. Fire burns—not at random, and I do not see that it burns from intelligence. Fire burns because it is the quality of heat to produce a certain effect upon the human skin or the human fluids. When a child stumbles upon the fire and gets burned, the fire does not act at random; it is the nature of fire to produce that effect upon the child's skin; and it does not happen, as I conceive, by intelligence, for I cannot understand intelligence directing the combination of child and fire, so that one should be ready to burn and the other to be burnt. Are such the intelligent arrangements of Mr. Lee's God and Creator?

But there is beauty in the world. True, and there is ugliness. Will Mr. Lee tell me who produces ugliness? God, he says, produced all, and if he is to take the credit for the beauty, I want him to take the discredit of the ugli-

ness. As a matter of fact, very few of us are as good-looking as we could wish to be, and I don't really think that you can ground the existence of God upon the argument of beauty. You yourself will admit that man has existed for thousands of years; surely by this time his Creator, with that high sense of beauty, ought to have made him a more presentable object than he is.

Then we are told there is intelligence because there is law and order. I have to complain that Mr. Lee has used for metaphysical purposes two terms which are commonly used in another sense—in political and social conversation. We speak of law and order in the political and social world, and what do we mean? By order we mean good behaviour; by law we mean edicts, decrees, or acts promulgated either by the king or the parliament of the country, and for the infraction of which there is a prescribed penalty. I deny that you have any right to use the word law in nature in any such sense as that. All you mean by law is a certain method in which things occur, and the question behind that which Mr. Lee is asking is this, Is that method in which things occur settled by intelligence, or is it the result of the absolute, unchangeable, inherent properties of matter? When you use the word "law" in a metaphysical sense, you are begging the very question at issue; for under cover of the term "law" you introduce the law-giver, which is the very subject we are met this evening to discuss.

Mr. Lee says that he can think about the stars, and that he can get thought out of them. (A laugh.) He cannot. Let an idiot look at a star for a thousand years, if he lived so long, and what thought would he get out of it? (Hisses.) Let a poet look at a star, and he might, to use this fashion of speech, get thought out of it; but the thought is not in the star—the capacity for thought is in the poet's brain. (Applause.) Mr. Lee did not get thought out of the star; he got it out of his own active intelligence.

Mr. Lee says that there is thought in the universe, and

if it is there, an intelligent being must have put it in. Now, I decline to countenance this language. One would fancy thought was something you could put into nature as you put water into a decanter. Wherever I see matter organised in a certain way, I find thought, and without that organisation I find *no* thought. When that organisation is broken or impaired, thought is broken or impaired; and when that organisation dies, to all human knowledge the thought dies with it. If you say that God put thought into the universe, what do you mean by this expression? Do you mean that he gave the universe the capacity of thinking? But then I thought matter could not think! God thus can do what, according to your theory, is a contradiction in language. God put thought into the universe? Why, thought is not general in the universe; thought is rather the exception. As a matter of fact, how much real thinking is there among the masses of men all over this planet to-day? And down below man there are more extensive orders of organic existence that think less and still less, until at last we get down to a point when no one would predicate thought at all. I know that, through a long process of evolution, the higher is evolved from the lower, and thought increases by the stress of life and the operation of the law of natural selection, leading to elimination of the unfit, the survival of the fit, and the continuance of the fit through the law of heredity. But when you tell me that thought is put into the universe, I say that thought is not in it as a *thing*. Thought to me is a *condition;* a condition confined to matter in a certain state of organisation; and I can attach no other meaning whatsoever to the term.

As to man's moral, mental, and religious nature, which is said to require a God, I deny altogether that there is any necessity for resorting to such an hypothesis. Man, we are told, has a capacity for limitless improvement in mind. I am not sure of that. That is prophecy, and a prophecy should be no basis for discussion. Mr. John Morley says

that the best way to answer a prophet is to prophesy the opposite. As a matter of fact, one of our greatest jurisprudists, Sir Henry Maine, in his powerful work upon *Popular Government*, argues that there are perceptible limits to man's intellectual capacity for improvement; and, in the face of this, it is idle to ask me to accept as an established fact what is only a conjecture about the future on the part of Mr. Lee himself.

Then man has aspirations for the true, the holy, and the eternal, and there must therefore be the true, the holy, the eternal! But does the Atheist say there is nothing true? Surely the Atheist can aspire to truth as well as the Theist. The motto of the National Secular Society, which does me the honor to elect me President, is "We seek for Truth." It is again idle to tell us the aspiration after truth involves the existence of the Being whom Mr. Lee is endeavoring to establish. And what do you mean by the word *holy?* Holy, as generally used, is something connected with religion. A clergyman is "a holy person," a church is "a holy building," and a Church festival, or Sunday, is "a holy day." Very well; if you use the word in that sense, I will leave you its full possession. But if by the word *holy* you mean anything which is dignified, honest, or pertains to the highest moral nature of man, then *we* aspire to the holy quite as much as any of the Theists who speak from the platforms or preach from the pulpits of the world.

A word, in conclusion, about man's moral sense. It is imposed from without by God, says Mr. Lee. I say that even men in your own Church, like Professor Henry Drummond, contend that morality is a natural evolution, without anything supernatural in it from beginning to end. God imposes morality upon us! Then why did he not impose it so that in all parts of the world it was understood alike? You say we know when we do right and when we do wrong. Do we? If you commit bigamy in England, you will get seven years' imprisonment; but if you commit it

in Turkey, you are acting in conformity with the laws of the land and the consciences of the people. What is the use of saying this morality is imposed from without by God, when its variation with time and place, its absolute accordance with the social and economic growth of man, proves it to be natural in its origin and development? (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am sure Mr. Lee cannot be insensible to the attention and consideration you have shown to both the speakers, and I am now about to ask Mr. Lee to continue the debate in an address of fifteen minutes. That effort will be responded to by his opponent in an address of similar length; and, after that, there will be another address from each gentleman, of corresponding proportions.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Mr. Foote commenced by complaining of my putting a series of questions to him, reading them out in the last three minutes of my speech as fast as I could. Now, I am leading to-night, and I demand that my questions be attended to. Mr. Foote says he is not a young debater. Neither am I a young debater. I therefore demand that my questions be attended to. I will attend to his questions to-morrow night, as far as I can.

Mr. Foote says that, in my own opinion, I have established a series of propositions. I am glad to say Mr. Foote has been unable to overturn them, and that, instead of replying to my questions, he has managed, in his address, to put questions to me.

Our friend says he does not intend to occupy the defensive for the greater ease of Mr. Lee. Now, sir, as we are met to discuss "Theism or Atheism: Which is the *more reasonable?*" I submit you cannot discuss that question apart from the universe; and, therefore, you have to give some fact in favor

of Atheism, no matter what you say against Theism. Theism may, or may not, be true; but, if you say nothing in favor of Atheism, you have not established your position.

Our friend said I defined the universe as the sum-total of all conditioned existence. I did; and I abide by that. But Mr. Foote says I assume to know something of an unconditioned existence. I do; and Mr. Foote cannot think of any material object without thinking of that object as conditioned; and he cannot think of the conditioned without being driven to the recognition of the unconditioned—you are bound to go on to the unconditioned. Mr. Foote may say there is nothing but the conditioned. I say there are the conditioned and the unconditioned.

But our friend went on to say that I defined reasonable as that which conforms to human intelligence. I did nothing of the kind. Mr. Foote has managed to leave out two very important words. I defined reasonable as that which conforms to the *logical demands* of man's mind. This is not saying that what is reasonable is reasonable, but that that is reasonable which is in harmony with the logical demands of the mental life we all possess.

But Mr. Foote says I defined Atheism and Theism to suit myself. I did not. I defined them in harmony with the great masters of language; and I say, when we come to debate terms which stand for great doctrines, we must use those terms, not as any individual wishes them to be used, but as the great masters of speech everywhere use them.

But he went on to say: "Atheism does not affirm *per se* a theory of the universe." Will Mr. Foote kindly tell me how Atheism can affirm anything *per se?* Mr. Bradlaugh said that, to him, the word "God" was a word without meaning. Then how could Mr. Bradlaugh justify his attempt to get rid of an affirmation which has a great deal of meaning to others, but none to himself? But Mr. Foote says he will quote Mr. Bradlaugh's words: "The Atheist does not say there is no God." I admit that. Mr. Bradlaugh

was far too wise a man to say, in so many words, "There is no God." Yet Mr. Bradlaugh did more than say "There is no God"—he sought to *prove* there could be none; and if that is not Atheism, I do not know what is.

Mr. Foote goes on to say it is very easy to talk loose metaphysical phrases. Yes; we have had a sample of that in Mr. Foote to-night.

Mr. Foote says: "Go to the man in the street, and ask him what he thinks about God. Will he give you the reasons Mr. Lee has given to-night?" The man, if he is a good man (I am not insinuating that an Atheist is not good), will say, "I believe in God," and will give reasons. But I am meeting a gentleman to-night who has no belief in God, and I must therefore meet him on common ground—ground on which we can both stand. I appeal, then, to reason, that mighty power which seeks the solution of all problems, and I say we cannot understand the facts of the universe unless we postulate and put behind them the necessary and absolute existence which is above and beyond both the universe and Mr. Foote himself. (Applause.)

Mr. Foote denied that Atheism *per se* denied the existence of God. I say Atheism cannot deny anything *per se*. We have no relation to that which is *per se*, "in itself." It must be manifested to us in some way; and, when Mr. Foote talks of things in this slipshod way, he uses pretty metaphysical phrases which have no meaning.

Mr. Foote paid me the compliment of saying my mind is not large enough to form a theory of the universe. No; but when, then, the universe is formed, I may be able to understand it. But, if my mind is not large enough to form a theory of the universe, how is Mr. Foote's mind large enough to show that my theory of the universe is not true? (Loud applause.)

Mr. Foote says, if we have no knowledge of the unconditioned, we have no right to assert its existence. Therefore, before we can make statements implying the existence of

God, we must have a knowledge of God. This Mr. Foote regards as impossible. But I would remind Mr. Foote that some of the great German philosophers hold that, before we can say anything is unknown and unknowable, you must be above and beyond it. But, if you are above and beyond it, you make it known; and so you destroy your doctrine that it is unknown. Thus, in getting rid of my proposition, Mr. Foote has got rid of his own contention that God is unknown and unknowable.

But Mr. Foote says I fell into a mistake when I spoke of matter and of the universe as different. I did so purposely —in other words, I was dealing in the first part of my remarks with the visible universe; but the matter which makes the universe, though a part of it, is not visible; and, when I used these two terms, I meant by the universe that which we can see, and by matter that which is resolvable into the atom, which we cannot see. I fail to see any difficulty in this position. Then as to the atoms which I referred to as bearing the marks of manufactured articles. Mr. Foote says this is a metaphorical expression, as nobody has seen them. Very well. If these atoms have not been seen, how do you know they do not bear the marks of being manufactured? In other words, Mr. Foote has to go through a process of reasoning in order to say these atoms do not bear these marks, just as great physicists like Clerk Maxwell have gone through processes of reasoning and say they do bear the marks. Personally, I prefer taking the statements of the physicists before those of Mr. Foote.

But, says our friend, if we think of this universe as the outcome of an existence which is eternal, and which is related to this universe as cause to effect, we are face to face with this difficulty: we cannot possibly conceive of creation. If by that you mean I cannot form an idea or image in my mind as to the way in which it was done, I agree with you; but if you say I cannot understand or apprehend the bringing of something into existence by a

being possessing the creative power of God, then I deny the statement.

Our friend further says: If you believe in creation, you must believe that it is either something different from God, or that it is God. Now, I have met this statement before the late Charles Bradlaugh invented it; but I put this suggestion to Mr. Foote: I believe the Creator of the universe stands in the same relation to the universe as I stand in relation to my thoughts. When Mr. Foote proves that my thoughts are me, then I will deal with his argument as to this world being God.

But, says Mr. Foote, "You get thought out of the stars? I deny that"; and he says, "We will bring an idiot." But who asked him to bring an idiot to get thought out of the stars? But "we will bring the poet." Yes, bring the poet; the poet looks at the stars, and he gets something out of them, and he writes a poem on the heavens. "Ah!" says Mr. Foote, "there is no thought in the universe; the thought is in the poet's brain." But how came it in the poet's brain? We will just press this a little closer. Let a man read a book, say Balfour Stewart's *Conservation of Energy*, and he will have more thought after he has read it than he had before. Where did the thought come from? It came from the thought in the book. In the same sense, this universe is a book to the mind of man, and thought can be got out of it.

But our friend talked about law being a certain method in which things work; but *how* came they to work in that method? This is a big metaphysical problem, and I want information.

Our friend says: "Wherever I see an organism in a certain condition, I see thought, and if that organism is injured or broken, thought is injured or broken." I hold in my hand Professor Ferrier's great work on "The Functions of the Brain," in which he says, at page 246: "When one hemisphere is removed or destroyed by disease, motion and

sensation are abolished unilaterally; *but mental operations are still capable of being carried on in their completeness through the agency of one hemisphere.*"

Mr. FOOTE: Mr. Lee demands—("Oh, oh")—I repeat that Mr. Lee demands what he has no power to exact. I have already declined, as any man of sense would decline, to answer questions read out to me, and not furnished to me. Mr. Lee, by his own act, robbed himself of the right to put questions. In the original conditions, as the Joint Committee know, there was to be a certain space of time—a quarter of an hour or so—allowed for questions between the disputants. It was Mr. Lee's own suggestion that the time for questions should be struck out.

Mr. LEE: I rise to a point of order. The part that was struck out was the part relating to a Socratic method of debate, in which the question should be put and immediately answered; but that does not rob me of the right to put questions in the course of my address. In every debate in which I have taken part these questions have always been recognised and answered.

Mr. FOOTE: Then, with whatever explanation Mr. Lee may qualify the statement, the statement is accurate, that at Mr. Lee's suggestion the time allotted for questions and answers was struck out from the original articles of debate; and I decline altogether to come here with the responsibility of answering questions that have not been furnished to me—questions that no memory could charge itself with the task of accurately retaining. If Mr. Lee wants questions of that kind answered, he shall furnish them beforehand, so that one could get an acquaintance with their terms and bearing. Every man knows that you can ask more questions in a couple of minutes than the wisest man on earth can answer in twenty-four hours. At any rate, Mr. Lee may

demand as much as he pleases; I refuse to accede to his demand, and leave him to whatever remedy he can discover.

Mr. Lee says that I was wrong in saying that I would not occupy the defensive in order that Mr. Lee might more easily take the offensive. Did I not explain to you that it is Mr. Lee's lead to-night? All I am required to do is to follow Mr. Lee, and to-morrow night he must follow me; otherwise, why does one disputant open on one night, and the other on the second night? It is my business to-night to oppose what Mr. Lee advances; to-morrow night it will be his business to oppose what I advance; and I absolutely decline to be drawn out of what I conceive to be the regular line of logical debate.

Mr. Lee said I did not give a single fact in favour of Atheism. Well, that is *his* opinion. *My* opinion is that he did not give a single fact in favour of Theism. But what is the use of bandying about mere expressions of opinion like that? It is for the audience to judge calmly after the debate is over, and not for the two disputants to say one has not established his position, and the other has not established his.

Mr. Lee said that he did not know anything of unconditioned existence, but he said that, after knowing conditioned existence, we were bound to go on to the idea of unconditioned existence. Permit me to observe that Mr. Lee has a perfect right to say what *he* is bound to do, but he has no right to say what *I* am bound to do. I do *not* feel bound to go on to unconditioned existence. All I know of is conditioned existence. I cannot conceive of what is called unconditioned existence. Therefore his statement falls absolutely to the ground, as it affects myself and a very large number of other people.

I read from Charles Bradlaugh to the effect that Atheism did not deny God—that is, *any* God; but the moment you define God Atheism asks whether your defined God is consistent with the facts of experience; and, if found incon-

sistent with those facts, then Atheism would have a perfect right to deny the existence of that God so defined. That is what Atheism does. If Mr. Lee tells me there is a God all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, I tell him that the facts of life contradict the existence of such a being. ("No, no.") We have heard the names of scientific men. Well, the greatest naturalist that ever lived, Charles Darwin—(a laugh)—the man that smiles at that name cannot know what he is smiling at—I say, the greatest naturalist that ever lived, Charles Darwin, said there is too much suffering in the world; and he, the greatest scientific intellect since Newton, in face of the facts that science has revealed, felt himself utterly unable to accept the God that Mr. Lee has put forward to-night, and predicated as absolutely necessary to logical human thought.

Now, we had a little merriment about "Atheism *per se*," but there is really nothing metaphysical about that. "*Per se*" simply means, as Mr. Lee knows, "by itself." You cannot think of a thing in universal connections. Man's powers being finite, he must isolate, for purposes of convenience, the objects of his thought; although, in external nature, they are all in infinite relations to each other. Thus, when you define a line, owing to the imperfection of human powers, you define it as "length without breadth"; but you never find this in actual experience. It is a device you have to resort to; you take the idea of length separate from the idea of breadth, although the two things are never found except in conjunction with each other. Very well. Atheism in itself, apart from the personal notion of individual Atheists—or, as I expressed it, "Atheism *per se*"—does not affirm a theory of the universe. I said that individual Atheists, like Mr. Bradlaugh himself, might affirm Monism (like Spinoza, who was charged with Atheism, but affirms Pantheism); but that is a different thing altogether from what are the logical contents of the term Atheism. I deny that Atheism affirms a theory of the universe. And if Mr.

Lee can establish his theory, he does not need to argue the unreasonableness of Atheism, for Atheism then disappears. Atheism is the rejection of those forms of Theism which, from past experience, and from what we can infer from present experience, are inconsistent with the facts of life. And in that sense I say Atheism is not at all affected by anything Mr. Lee has said. It is not for me to prove there is no God; Charles Bradlaugh never set out to prove there is no God. Charles Bradlaugh set out to prove that the God defined by Theists was not consistent with facts that were indisputable, and therefore he denied that conception.

Mr. Lee says that God explains all—does it? (I say "it," because I take God now as an hypothesis.) God explain all? Not to me; God does not, to me, make anything any more intelligible. Here is an atom, you say; minute, invisible; how did it originate? The very question, "How did it originate?" involves the statement that it *did* originate. I deny your right to make the statement that the atom originated. I say that you have to prove that it did originate before you have a right to ask the "how."

Then, in the next place, if we assume, for the purpose of argument, that the atom did originate, I deny that you can think—you may believe, but you cannot *think;* that is, you cannot think out, you cannot realise in your own mind the idea—of a mind creating an atom. I deny altogether that anybody has the power to conceive creation in the religious or metaphysical sense of the word. All man can do by the exertion of his utmost powers is to shift matter—pre-existent matter, matter that will exist after he is dead—from one position to another. All creation is to us the re-shaping of pre-existent matter. I deny that the human mind is capable of realising creation in any absolute sense of the word.

It is no explanation of the atom to tell me that God made it. That is offering me one mystery as the explanation of another mystery. The origin of the atom is a mystery; a Being is brought in hypothetically, who is a greater mystery

than the atom itself; and how can this mystery explain the other? I will tell you how a thing is explained. A thing is explained when Science shows us exactly its origin, its growth, its development, and possibly its decay and disappearance; tracing it from its initial stage to the completion of its career. That is a scientific explanation; and, when Science explains a thing like that, we understand it; but it is not a scientific or a rational explanation of a thing to say, "God did it." That is what ignorance has said in all ages. (Applause.)

It used to be asked, "Who made the world?" until the nebular hypothesis explained to us the history of worlds. Then the question was shifted farther back, and it was asked, "Who made all the various species of life upon this planet?" Darwin explained the Origin of Species—I will not say to the satisfaction of all parties, but to the satisfaction of scientific men. And now the question is put farther back—"Who made life? Or who made the atoms?" In other words, the banner of Theology is always planted at the point where knowledge ends and ignorance begins. It is driven farther and farther back. It is the banner, not of Knowledge, but of Mystery. It is the flag of Superstition, under which all the priesthoods of the world have gathered for the exploitation of the people. (Applause.)

Mr. Lee said that he used the word universe to signify visible matter. Now, there is no distinction between visible and invisible matter, except in Mr. Lee's powers of perception. Visible matter means matter large enough to be seen. But if you have millions upon millions of invisible atoms forming a visible combination of matter, there is no difference in the condition of the atoms because they are in collection, and large enough for our organs of vision to perceive them. That is a distinction without a difference.

A word about brain and thought. Who ever said that man—who has two brains working in combination, though sometimes not in entire harmony—who ever said that he

could not think with one hemisphere when the other was injured? A man sees with two eyes; but, if he loses the sight of one eye, he can see fairly well with the other. It is a question of focus. I did not say that two hemispheres were absolutely necessary. I said that brain is necessary to thought. If the second hemisphere goes too, thought disappears. There is no thought without bodily organism. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: We have now reached the last stage of this interesting and ably-conducted debate, and I will ask Mr. Lee to give us what must be, for to-night, his final contribution.

Mr. LEE: I want to go back to my first speech. Our friend referred to a fire and a child, and he said he could not believe that God had planned the fire and the child to meet together. Neither do I. But Mr. Foote does not get rid of the *fact* of the fire and the child meeting. Whatever his theory of the universe may be, he still has to face the *fact*. Mr. Foote does not believe in Christianity because God is represented as interfering in the world, and he does not believe in God because he does not interfere in the world. Is not that a contradiction? The fact is, whatever you do to please Mr. Foote, you cannot satisfy him.

Our friend says that law is a certain method in which things occur. I asked him in my last speech kindly to explain how the things came to have that method of working; but Mr. Foote says he is not here to answer questions. We are very much like the naughty boy; we ought not to ask questions. That is our opponent's privilege.

Mr. Foote goes on to say in reference to the National Secular Society, of which he is President, that that Society, as well as those who are on my side, are firm believers in truth. Yes, but there is just this difference. Of course, it is only a matter of opinion, Mr. Foote would say; but with

us it is a question of conviction. Mr. Foote tells us the National Secular Society is in *search* of truth. *We* Theists believe we have *found* it. (Cheers.)

Mr. Foote says, no matter what Mr. Lee demands, Mr. Lee struck out the part of the conditions of debate which referred to a Socratic debate, and, therefore, has no right to ask questions. The reason I struck that part of the conditions out was this. I do not believe in mixing up things that differ. If we want a Socratic debate, we will have it; but I object to wedging in half-an-hour of Socratic debate in a debate of another character; but I still have the right to ask questions respecting matters which are fundamental to my position and to Mr. Foote's. If we have no right to ask such questions, why are we here to discuss?

But Mr. Foote says that I have not been able to produce a single fact in favour of Theism. Well, now, I have produced a series of propositions; I have shown that something must be eternal. Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that that something must have power; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that something must be the cause of the changes in this universe; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that the different movements going on in this universe are going on in accordance with law; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. And I have shown you that we have reason, mind, a religious and moral sense; but Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. The whole of my propositions stand untouched —(applause)—and not only untouched, but the banner of theology, which Mr. Foote has spoken of as floating above the place where ignorance begins and knowledge ends—this banner of theology—this banner, sir—floats high above our heads, not as the symbol of "we do not know," but as the sign of a coming victory which has already been shown to be ours by your refusing to deal with these questions. (Loud applause.) Ah, Mr. Foote says, "the banner of

theology." I have never seen a banner yet where there were not contending armies. And I have never seen a banner floating only as the sign of victory; and, if it floats to-night on this platform, then on this platform *we* have victory, and not defeat.

Mr. Foote says what is the use of bandying statements one against the other. Well, I did not begin this practice; Mr. Foote commenced it, and, therefore, Mr. Foote must not complain if I serve him in the same way he has served me.

But he goes on to say that Mr. Lee said he did not know the unconditioned. I did not. I say I *do* know the unconditioned—that is, I apprehend it; I do not form an image of it, but I apprehend it. A cup is not big enough to hold the sea, but it will hold some of it, so that we can tell what kind of a thing the sea is. So we can know something of God. We have shown him to be power, intelligent, and personal, and, therefore, we have shown that God is something, and that we know something of God.

Mr. Foote seems to have missed my argument on this point altogether. He says he knows nothing but the conditioned, and he refuses to go on to the unconditioned; but, I say, if you know the conditioned, by the laws of mental life you *must* go on to the unconditioned, and the man who refuses to go on to the unconditioned does not represent the floating banner of victory, but rather has his back to the doctrine which he seeks to overthrow.

But Mr. Foote says that Atheism denies the existence of a defined God, and goes on to show that Atheism is the rejection of those forms of Theism which we hold. Now, I thought that awfully funny; because, if it is only the rejection of the definitions of God which have been brought to Mr. Foote's notice, then a definition of God *may* be framed which will ultimately overthrow Atheism, and God, after all, be established in his mind. In other words, Mr. Foote is not fighting God; he is fighting definitions. Now I, for one,

do not believe in fighting definitions, unless I know that those definitions are part and parcel of the thing I fight. I have not attempted this evening to give you a definition of God; I have given you a few suggestions as to what I understand God to be. I told you I believe him to be an eternal something, having power and intelligence, and such-like. But, while I do not know all about God, I know something of God; I do not know all about Derby, but I know something of Derby. Still, I have often said—I said it three months ago—I am not one of those who say they believe in God; I have got a knowledge of God. I go beyond belief —I *know* God.

Our friend talked to us about the defects of definitions and such-like, and went on to say that the atom is something, and that the universe is only a bigger atom. Well, now, I object altogether to this position of Mr. Foote's, because he said that an atom is something which cannot be seen. Now, not only is an atom that which cannot be seen —he has told us that—but he went on to say that this world of ours must be the same as the matter which is unseen. Now, if that is so, then the unseen atom must be under the same conditions as this seen table; and, as this seen table cannot move itself, how came the atom to move itself?

But our friend says that I simply get rid of one difficulty —the origin of the atom—in order to bring in a greater difficulty—God. No, I do not. Mr. Foote has told us that an atom is that which is so infinitely little that it cannot be seen; yet Mr. Foote must, if he is logical, seek to build up this wondrous universe, with its teeming forms of living activity, from a thing that cannot be seen, and that is so infinitely powerless that it can do nothing of itself—because "the unseen must be the same as the seen." Then he says I bring in another subject which is equally unthinkable. Did I not show you that something must be eternal? Does Mr. Foote believe the atom is eternal? If so, he is opposed

to the greatest physicists in the world, who say it is not eternal.

Balfour Stewart will be my answer to another statement of Mr. Foote's. He said: "When Science explains a thing, it accounts for its origin, its growth, and its decay." I hold in my hand Balfour Stewart on *The Conservation of Energy*, and he shows in this book, by scientific induction, that this universe is like a candle lit, and must go out. He shows what its origin was, what its growth has been, and what its decay will probably be, by scientific facts, and proves that this universe is not eternal. Mr. Foote will have to reckon, not with Mr. Lee, but with Professor Balfour Stewart, the greatest physicist England has ever produced.

Mr. Foote has given us a series of statements this evening which I think he will find it very difficult to substantiate; but to-morrow night, when he leads in this discussion, we shall have, as I understand, a statement as to what sort of a constructive system Atheism is. If Atheism is not a constructive system, it does not prove itself to be reasonable by showing that Theism is unreasonable. What it has to do is to show that it is *more* reasonable than Theism.

Now, I find I have a body—Mr. Foote has one. In this body I find certain appetites—hunger, thirst. These appetites prove to me that I need something, and that somewhere there is something to satisfy these wants; in other words, somewhere there are food and drink. So that these appetites are proofs to me of a want, and proofs to me also that there is, somewhere, something to supply that want. I also have a mind, and this mind yearns for knowledge; and the existence of this appetite for knowledge is a proof to me that I need knowledge, and that somewhere there is knowledge to be had. I have a spirit or self which yearns for God, and this yearning in me proves to me that somewhere there must be a God; for, if you trust your physical appetites and your mental appetites, why not trust your spiritual appetites also? And if your hunger proves that somewhere

there is food, if your mental hunger proves that somewhere there is knowledge, the hunger of the soul proves that somewhere there is God. Mr. Foote may say, "I have not got this appetite, I know nothing about it"; but, as we do not trust a blind man when we wish to know something about the sun, neither do we trust an Atheist when we want to know something about God. (Cheers.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am sure you must have undergone considerable inconvenience in the heat of this crowded hall, especially those of you who are standing; but it seems to me so in harmony with the instincts of fair play that Mr. Foote should have a full, a fair, and impartial hearing to the end that I trust no one will leave the meeting until Mr. Foote has finished his concluding address.

Mr. LEE expressed a similar wish.

Mr. FOOTE: I am extremely obliged for the kindly spirit which was manifested in the hint just given, but I hardly think it is necessary. I do not feel so profoundly upon the matter as it seems to be imagined, and if any lady or gentleman, at any time, does not want to hear me, I really do not object to their withdrawing. On the other hand, I do not think it is a right thing to assume that anybody *would* leave the meeting. Personally, I think we ought to accept people's innocence until there is reason to believe they are guilty. (Dissent and interruption.) Apparently one disputant is free to introduce a matter which the other disputant is not to say anything about. Is that fair play?

Mr. Lee said that the child and the fire meet, and the fire burns, and what I have got to do is to explain why it burns. ("No, no.") I repeat that Mr. Lee said I was bound to explain how it came to burn. Now, I say I am under no such necessity. All I am obliged to do, if I want to be

scientific, is to explain the action of fire upon the tissues of the human organism. It does not matter one iota, in the case of the child and the fire, by what argument you come to the conclusion that atoms were endowed or not endowed with their properties. It is enough for my guidance in this world to know the action of fire upon the tissues of the human organism. In that scientific explanation we have all that is necessary to us here, and metaphysics and theology are an useless burden upon our shoulders.

Mr. Lee says that the Secularists are in search of truth, but the Christians have found it. Not *all* truth, I apprehend? (A laugh.) Then, if it does not mean that, it does not mean anything. When the Secularist says he is in search of truth, he is not to be understood to mean that he has not yet discovered any truth. What he means is that he is in search of *new* truth, fresh truth, the truth of to-morrow, with its higher standpoint, with its command of a broader horizon, above the lower truth or falsehood of yesterday, that kept us crawling and abject, instead of making us dignified and independent.

Mr. Lee continues to assert that something is eternal, by which he can only mean that there is something existing which he is unable, in thought, to limit in time. No man has any right to affirm dogmatically that anything existed eternally. He has a right to say he cannot help thinking so, but no one has a right dogmatically to affirm anything which he does not *know*; and no man can *know* the eternity of anything unless he himself is eternal, having eternally co-existed with it.

Mr. Lee was good enough to say that I did not touch any of his points, including the moral nature of man; but I thought I was called to time just at the very moment when I was dealing with the moral nature of man in my first speech. I am willing to let the audience decide, calmly and dispassionately, when the debate is over, as to that. Whether Mr. Lee thinks I have touched his points or not is a matter of very small importance to me. Mr. Lee does not expect

to convert me, and, if I had answered all his propositions to his satisfaction, he would not become an Atheist. What is the use, then, of his saying I have not answered his questions? All I can do is to reply. I do not expect Mr. Lee to think that I have shattered all his positions.

Mr. Lee says he knows the unconditioned; but I deny that he knows, or can know, the unconditioned. He is himself distinctly conditioned, every moment of his life being absolutely dependent upon his environment. When he talks about matter being incapable of moving itself, I tell Mr. Lee that he himself, except in relation to external nature, would lose all capacity of thought. Mankind can only work under the stimulus of the external universe. We begin with sensations, perceptions; we weave them into ideas; but it is the stimulus of the external universe that furnishes us with the sensations, and it is the stimulus of that external universe that keeps alive the activity of our powers.

Mr. Lee said it was no use fighting definitions. What else can we fight in a discussion? It is idle to talk about fighting God: we are here to fight over *the defined God.* If God exists, he does not require any man's defence; and if God do not exist, no man's defence can establish his existence. Our object is discussion, and discussion can only proceed upon definitions; consequently it is really definitions that we are here to debate.

We were told that the religious banner is a sign of victory. Not necessarily. Both armies carry banners into the field, and in general it is only one side that wins. And banners are not confined to battle; they are floated in times of peace as well as in war. I do not think it is right to found an argument upon a metaphor. A metaphor is a very good thing as an adornment, a help, an illustration—but no more. And when you say your banner is triumphant, I say the very fact that, after thousands of years of priestly teaching, and of the authority of religion over the child's mind—I

say, the very fact that, after it all, we are met to-night to discuss this very question of God's existence shows that your banner is *not* triumphant. (Applause.)

You have an appetite for knowledge, and you think that that appetite postulates infinite knowledge; you have an aspiration for knowledge of God, and you think that that postulates the existence of God. I say that there is no logical connection between your desires and the certainty of their satisfaction. A man may yearn for food in the midst of starvation; the appetite and the food *may* go together, but they may *not*, or starvation would never occur. Appetite is, of course, in its strict meaning, the clamour of the stomach for food, owing to the depletion of the organ under exercise and air. That is all its primary meaning, and when you use the word in any other sense you are only using it in a metaphorical, and not in a debating sense. If you want knowledge, have you not field enough in studying the universe without beginning with dogmatism about its origin? You want truth, you say? Well, all the scientists of the world have not learned all that can be learned about Nature; and even Shakespeare, the greatest reader of human nature, has not fathomed all the profound recesses of human thought and feeling. Surely there is room within this great universe to expatiate, without trying to fly in a vacuum.

Then I am told that Balfour Stewart says the atom was created or originated; I don't care which term you use, it comes to the same thing. Now, it is quite true that the authors —for there were *two* of them—of "The Unseen Universe" did take up that position, and it is equally true that Professor Clifford opposed them; and Professor Clifford was one of the first scientific men of this country, and probably of the world. What is the use of saying I must bow down to the authority of one scientific man when another scientific man opposes him on grounds of science? I say the man of science has no more power of deciding about the creation

of matter than any common man that walks the streets. He can tell you how atoms combine, and how they divide; he can show you their chemical properties; but he has no knowledge whatever of their creation or origination. The doctrine accepted by all scientists is that man cannot create an atom, man cannot destroy an atom; and I say that, arguing from analogy, it is reasonable—at any rate, *more* reasonable—to suppose that what cannot be destroyed will never cease to be, and that what cannot be made never began to be.

Finally, we were told, in poetical language, about God's kindness; and we were given a poetical recitation, which I hope Mr. Lee did not think was any contribution to the debate. I might cite poetry, but then is that discussion? Shelley said the name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness. You talk of the kindness of your God! I fail to see the kindness when I look at the history of the world. The great Cardinal Newman, the keenest theological intellect that this country has produced in the present century, said that, although his being was full of the idea of God, yet when he looked into the universe the impression made upon him was as though he had looked into a mirror and saw no reflection of his face. What he saw in the world was incompatible with the doctrines of theology in which he had been educated. The kindness of God and religion! The kindness of the *auto-da-fé!* The kindness of the thumb-screw, the rack, the torture chamber! The kindness of the heretic's dungeon! The kindness of perverting and distorting the mind of the child! I prefer the kindness of Humanity to the kindness of all the gods the world has ever known. (Loud applause.)

SECOND NIGHT.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—In commencing the business of this evening I shall content myself by expressing the hope that the courteous and careful attention paid by the audience last night to both the gentlemen who figure in this debate will be repeated on this occasion. You are all, no doubt, well aware of the subject of the discussion, and it will only remain for me to remark for your information that certain regulations have been drawn up by the Joint Committee who have the management of the arrangements, and acquiesced in by both the disputants. Last evening Mr. Lee opened the debate by delivering an address of thirty minutes' duration. He was replied to in a speech of similar length by Mr. Foote, and subsequently both gentlemen delivered two speeches of a quarter of an hour in length. The same order of procedure will be followed this evening, with this distinction, that to-night Mr. Foote opens the debate, and he will be replied to by Mr. Lee; and then will follow, in the natural order of events, a series of speeches corresponding to those delivered last evening.

I will now, without further ado, and with a desire to expedite the business of the meeting, ask Mr. Foote to open the debate.

Mr. FOOTE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lee, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The subject we are met to discuss to-night, as last night, is "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" My friendly opponent led off last night, and, of

course, had the opportunity of deciding the direction of the evening's debate. To-night that opportunity lies with me. I do not suppose that anybody who differs from me (and in this I will include my opponent) will be quite satisfied with the direction I take; but I am in the conduct of my own case, and I intend to do what I consider to be justice to it, quite irrespective of the opinions of anyone else. (Hear, hear.)

Now I wish, at the outset, to say just a few words about the direction the debate took last night. It was mainly of a metaphysical character, and chiefly turned upon the problem of the origin of the universe, if I may express it in that summary fashion. Mr. Lee told us a great deal about matter and atoms, and the whole argument really turned upon what is admittedly incomprehensible—that is, incomprehensible in the present state of our knowledge. I am not one of those who say that no particular problem will at some future time be solved; but one *is* entitled to say that a certain specified problem is insoluble in the present condition of human knowledge; and, as a matter of fact, when you discuss the origin of matter, you are discussing a thing which, from the very nature of the case, you are not in a position to determine. And it appears to me that you may mix up with a discussion of that kind a great deal of very questionable physics. For instance, we were told last night that, if the universe were full of matter, there would be no possibility of motion; but, of course, that overlooks the fact that combinations of matter are of various degrees of density. Every time Mr. Lee and I walk along the street we walk, as it were, through matter, for the air around us is as much matter, although in a gaseous condition, as this table or the floor upon which we stand. To illustrate this from another standpoint: if you were to take a bottle and put half-a-dozen marbles in it, and then fill the bottle right up with water, and hermetically seal it, you would find that, as you moved the bottle about, the marbles, under the law of

gravitation, would shift their position, and that they would pass through the fluid medium of water, although the receptacle which contained them was full. Now, of course, in the same way, the various heavenly bodies move through what is described as an infinite elastic substance—the interstellar ether. If you have elasticity, and if you have bodies of various degrees of density, it seems to me absurd to say that, if the universe were full of matter, there would be no room for and no possibility of motion. I might, of course, take some other illustrations, but these will suffice to show that when you get discussing these questions about the origin of matter, unless you happen to be as perfectly well up in physics as, say, Balfour Stewart, it is easy to go astray.

Last night Mr. Lee defined Atheism, and he defined Theism; but I am not bound, all through this discussion, to be tied up by his definitions. I am going to tell you what I mean by Atheism, and I shall tell you in a moment what I mean by Theism. Atheism is simply "not Theism." Atheism does not deny the existence of God—that is, of *any* God. Atheism is opposed to every form of Theism which has yet been propounded to the world. The Atheist is a person who, if there be anything in Theism, is desirous of ascertaining what it is, and, if it be true, of accepting it. Consequently he takes the trouble to examine the various theories that are propounded, and, as far as he can, he ascertains their worth. Now, the Atheist considers that all the Theistic theories that have been propounded labour under disadvantages, which, at any rate at present, seem impossible of removal. An Atheist, then, is one who is not a Theist. The prefix "A" does not mean denial; it means "without"; and, consequently, I shall use the term "Atheism" to-night as "not Theism"—or, if you please, "against Theism," in so far as Theism endeavors to define its God, and defines him in a manner which is contradicted by indisputable facts of existence. Of course, I may be told—we *were* told last night—that such an Atheism is not constructive; in other

words, that Atheism does not explain the universe. Well, no Atheist attempts to explain the universe. He is more modest than to pretend to do anything of the kind. The Atheist declares that the finite intelligence of man is not capable of solving the infinite problem of the inconceivably distant origin of this universe. (Cheers.) But if you pressed me, and said that, as a thinker, I must have *some* idea upon the subject, I should say: "Very well; I am not prepared to assert that matter is either eternal or not eternal; I am not in a position to make a positive assertion where I have no positive evidence; but it is as open for me to conjecture as for any man, and perhaps my conjecture would be as true as his; and, if you tell me there must be an eternal something, I should start from what I know, for I would rather believe in the eternity of what I know than in the eternity of something that I have not been able to discover. And so, I say, matter exists; matter is all about us; our bodily organism, at any rate, is material; and I would prefer to believe that the matter which, according to physical teaching, is, by us at any rate, indestructible in its atoms, is *essentially* indestructible; that it never began to be; that, as it exists now, and did exist eternally in the past, so it will continue to exist eternally in the future." In other words, if there is to be an eternal something, I prefer an eternal something which I know, to an eternal nothing which is only the postulate of an opponent in a discussion. (Applause.)

Atheism and Theism, except they come into dogmatic relationship to morals and conduct, are speculations, and it is well known that speculations—the *very same* speculations—can be entertained by men of all varieties of moral character and condition. Indeed, when one speculation is before the world, and another is opposed to it, and when the world has been discussing these speculations for thousands of years, and is still discussing them, with no hope of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, an impartial, honest, and careful thinker is tempted to ask himself, What is the

reason of this perpetual discord, in spite of this perpetual discussion? For my part, I am obliged—I cannot *help* myself—to fall back upon the explanation that this discussion has never been settled, because the disputants have not the facts to go by. When you discuss a matter of science, or a matter of history, you get at *the facts;* and, by-and-bye, the facts determine the judgment of the people who study them. But, when you are speculating about the unknown, you have *no* facts to go upon; hence it is a mere matter of conjecture; and, as conjecture is determined by individual preference, taste, predilection, and even imagination and fancy, it is quite natural that, in the absence of facts to sway the judgment, this discord should continue as long as men will look in that direction for truth. And I, for one, fall back—as an Atheist falls back, as the old type of Atheists all fell back—upon the position that man can never sound, with his finite plummet, the depths of an infinite universe; that man cannot, with his finite intelligence, solve an infinite problem; and that it is his business to fall back upon practical knowledge and practical conduct. In short, the constructive side of Atheism is Secularism. Secularism deals with *this* world. The Atheist, as such, may deny Theism as it is propounded in definitions; but you have the constructive side of Atheism in the practical system of Secularism. Theism itself is no more really constructive than Atheism. It is a speculation about the origin and government of the universe, and Atheism is in opposition to that particular speculation. Before either of them can construct, they must descend to the common ground of human nature and human experience. That common ground is open to every form of belief for constructive purposes; it is not the exclusive possession of Theism, to which school my friendly opponent belongs. I say, therefore, that the whole question between Atheism and Theism, as to their reasonableness, resolves itself into the trial of Theism. It is the Theist who propounds *his* theory. I have *no* theory

of the universe; and, when the words were put down for discussion, I declined to admit them. The Atheist has no such theory. He does not set out to explain the universe; he tries to learn as much as he can about it; and, if he learns any new truth to-day, there is more to be learned to-morrow. As long as man's mind is finite, and he has to inhabit this world—which is really but as a speck of dust in the infinitude of space—however far he advances, there will be the same old horizon of knowledge. However we may gather knowledge in the years to come, our far-off posterity will have a similar opportunity, and may they put it to a similar use! (Applause.)

Now, if we have to enter upon a trial of Theism, we must understand what Theism is. Mr. Lee, last night, refrained from defining God. His God accounts for everything, but the very thing which was all-important in the case was never defined.

I shall define Theism as "that form of belief which declares that the visible, tangible, conditioned universe is created and governed by infinite intelligence, which belongs to an infinite personality, which is characterised by infinite power and infinite wisdom; nay, more—it is characterised, according to Theistic teaching, by infinite goodness or benevolence." What I am going to do in the trial of Theism is to ascertain whether the facts fit in with the theory. I am not going to rush off to a supposed centre, to which the sun, with all our system, is hurrying. I am not going to peer with the microscope in the vain hope of discovering the origin of the atom. I am going to speak about what we know of the facts of life, instead of rushing off into infinite space. I am going to see what can be found in this world, the world in which we live. (Applause.) I submit that, if Theism can be proved at all, it ought to be proved from what we thoroughly know, rather than from what we are only inadequately acquainted with.

Now, what is the great teaching of men of science—a

teaching which, although originating outside the Churches, is spreading within, and infecting them all? It is the doctrine of Evolution. The bishops are accepting it; the foremost champions of Christianity are accepting it; Mr. Benjamin Kidd, one of the most powerful defenders of religion, accepts Darwinism as a starting-point; and Professor Henry Drummond, the author of *The Ascent of Man* —who differs from Mr. Kidd very largely, yet agrees with him in this—starts with Darwinism as an established truth. It does not matter if some of the clergy still look askance at it; for, as Charles Darwin said, it is the business of men of science to find out what is true, and, when the men of science are agreed, all the clergy have to do is to say, "Ditto." Now, what is this Evolution? Evolution is not a plan which you can imagine devised by infinite wisdom, and carried out by infinite power, prompted by infinite benevolence. What is the great principle which Charles Darwin established to the satisfaction of the scientific world? It is natural selection; and the result of that is what Herbert Spencer calls "the survival of the fittest." What does natural selection operate upon? The struggle for existence. This planet is limited in size. It is limited in the amount of subsistence it affords to animal life. Nature is producing animal life in superabundance; it is impossible for all to subsist; and the result is, they are all engaged, upon the lines of evolution, in a struggle for life. One order of existence presses upon another, and, as Darwin's grandfather said, the law of life on this globe is "eat or be eaten." Now, I cannot imagine a God of infinite wisdom, infinite love, and infinite power, planning a universe in which living beings have to submit to the law of "eat or be eaten." I would rather not have to kill; I would rather not see all living things about me engaged in killing each other. But they *do* kill each other; and man, with supreme impartiality, kills all the rest when they stand in his way, or when he wants them for his feast or sport.

Now, what does this struggle for existence mean? It means that the world, ever since the rise upon it of organic life—at least, ever since the advent of beings who are capable of feeling pleasure and pain—has been one great cock-pit, running red with the blood of mutual slaughter. In this struggle for existence there is no quarter given. You are not let off to fight another day. As Professor Huxley says, the result for the vanquished is death. And this red cock-pit, which the world has been ever since sentient organisms appeared upon it, I am told by the Theists was designed, and that the Being who designed it foresaw all that would happen, sees what does happen, and, in spite of all our efforts to improve it, continues it as it is. I say that this is too hard for common flesh and blood to believe, if we realise what it means. I would rather be an Atheist, who says, "I know nothing of God, and your definition of God does not commend itself to my intelligence, in the face of the facts of existence," than be a Theist, believing in a God who permits —nay, as Creator, *ordained*—that which every tender-hearted man and woman would put a stop to, if possible, to-morrow. (Applause.)

What is human history? Looked at through the long records that have come down to us, it is more or less a long succession of quarrelling, largely about religion, and wars of dynasty and ambition, and the sacrifice of the lives, liberties, and happiness of the great masses of the people, in the interests of those who leaped into the seats of power, and used mankind for their own purposes. Why, it is only within recent memory that the people, even in civilised countries, have been brought within the pale of a free constitution. Their whole lives were previously decided for them by a handful of upper classes. I can no more see in human history, than I can see in Evolution, the signs of an intelligent and moral governor. Even when we take man as he now is, where and how does Theism justify itself? The human organism is extremely imperfect. Take the most

splendid-looking specimen, and the physiologist will tell you that, even in such a case, there are many variations from the normal standard. And how many of us are splendid specimens? If you take the world all through, the condition of man as an organism, stripped of the vanity of his apparel, reflects no great credit upon his Creator. (Dissent.) This Creator has been producing men for thousands of years, and has not yet learned to produce men who can bring about a state of society without workhouses, without gaols, without pauperism. (Applause.) Why, I think if we were constructed with something less than infinite wisdom, with something less than infinite goodness, with something less than infinite power, one might expect the human race to be better than it now is after all these thousands of years of experiment. (Applause.)

Even if you take the human organ which Paley, in his *Natural Theology*, laid so much stress upon, what is the fact? I observe that Mr. Lee, like myself, trusts to the aid of glasses. Now, I went to a very eminent optician in London, some few months ago, to have my eyes tested afresh, and he said, in the way of conversation, as a practical man, that the human eye was a very imperfect instrument. Professor Tyndall says that the great German scientist, Helmholtz, who died last year, declared that if a thing like the human eye were sent to him by a workman, he would send it back with severe reprobation. I cannot conceive that infinite intelligence, after thousands of years of practice, could not turn out better eyes than are now located in our heads. And what have we found since rapid communication came in, and engine-drivers were employed who had to be signalled with colored lights? It has been discovered that a very large percentage of people are color-blind, and cannot distinguish colors accurately, especially blue and red and green. Now, if this be so, it argues some defect in the Infinite Designer of the universe, and I want to know who is responsible for these defects. If some other being is not

responsible for them, then God is responsible for them. If God produces eyes that cannot see, or eyes that can only see very inadequately, it is idle to tell me that his wisdom and power are infinite; for infinite wisdom would know how to produce better eyes, and infinite power would be able to second the designs of infinite wisdom.

Then look at the disasters that occur in the world. Man is encouraged to build his house, to found his home, and suddenly, without warning, the earthquake shatters it and kills him; or, if he is spared himself, perhaps his dearest are buried beneath its ruins. Do you mean to tell me that an infinite intelligence is responsible for this? Do you mean to tell me that the work of that infinite intelligence is prompted by infinite wisdom, and is carried out by infinite power? I say that these disasters that are constantly desolating the world, that these pestilences, these blightings of crops, are all confutations of your Theistic theory. Here in England we send missionaries out to India, and when a famine occurs in India through the failure of the harvest we subscribe money in order to save from starvation the people who, if left to providence, would starve by the action of this God of infinite wisdom and goodness and power.

How, upon the Theistic hypothesis, can you reconcile yourself to the fact of disease? Disease is ever baffling the man of science. Often, as we master one disease, another becomes more malignant. As we learn how to treat fevers, cancer becomes more severe in its ravages; and, as we manage, by improved sanitation, to get a better condition of general health among the people, we suffer from that disease which is known as insanity, and which is gaining ground in every civilised country. Now, what is the *cause* of these diseases? You may tell me it is the microbes; but who made the microbes to produce diseases? Your infinite deity planned the microbe and planned the man; he arranged it so that the microbe would get into the man's blood, and set up an action there which produces terrible

suffering, and perhaps death. A man is produced; he may be a splendid specimen of the human race; but a cancer is planted within him by the arrangements of this infinite intelligence, and he becomes a mere provider for a malignant, devouring parasite.

While these things continue, while destitution fills our workhouses, while crime fills our gaols, while disease fills our hospitals, while insanity fills our asylums, and while men are engaged in mutual slaughter all over the world, I say I remain an Atheist, and that the facts of life contradict the Theism which you are asking me to accept.

The minute which is reserved to me now I will spend in just enforcing, very briefly, a summary of my position.

Atheism is not a denial of any God. It is being without God, because one cannot see the evidence of his existence; or because the facts of life are opposed to Theism as it is propounded. Atheism, as such, is not called upon to affirm, as a result of finite speculation, any theory about the origin of an infinite universe. When the Atheist, with men of science to back him, looks through the process of evolution, looks through the history of the world, examines the present condition of sentient existence upon the globe, he sees everywhere about him strong demonstration that Theism, which defines God as infinitely wise, powerful, and good, cannot be true. The theory does not fit the facts. You must, therefore, either remove the facts (which you cannot), or you must alter your theory. As your theory stands, and as the facts stand, they contradict each other. And the Atheistic position is supported by the contradiction between your theory and the experience of our lives. (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—Before calling upon Mr. Lee to reply, I will take the liberty of suggesting that those persons who feel somewhat impatient as they listen to views which do not accord with their own should repress their zeal, with the consciousness that their own

champion will, in due course, have the opportunity of replying. I must, further, press this point, because, with every desire to be impartial, I cannot be blind to the fact that the majority of persons present are in distinct opposition to the views expressed by the gentleman who has just sat down.

I will take the liberty of saying that the attribute of fair play demands that the courage he displays in standing before an hostile audience, and so fearlessly expounding his principles, should secure for him a patient and respectful hearing.

I make these observations in good faith, and I also bespeak for Mr. Lee your kindly consideration, as he has been seriously indisposed to-day, and I can only regard his presence here to-night as an indication of his pluck and determination in carrying through his part of the program.

Mr. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have listened to the address which Mr. Foote has given us with a very great deal of attention, but, I must say, with a very great deal of disappointment. I gathered that Mr. Foote wished us to understand that Atheists had no theory of the universe; but, before Mr. Foote sat down, he showed us that they have a theory of the universe; that they are able to judge of the Theistic theory, and declare it to be bad, and speak of another—the Atheistic—as better.

In spite of these facts, Mr. Foote has repeated his statement that Atheism does not deny God, and that Atheism has no theory of the universe. I hold in my hand Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's debate with the Rev. T. Lawson, of West Hartlepool, on *Is Atheism the True Doctrine of the Universe?* Mr. Foote quoted Mr. Bradlaugh several times last night; I am therefore appealing to his own authority to refute his statements. Mr. Bradlaugh says: "By Atheism I mean the affirmation of one existence. This affirmation is a positive, not a negative, affirmation, and is properly

describable as Atheism, *because it does not include in it any possibility of Theism—that is, of God.*" On page 2 of this book he very justly says: "Either Atheism or Theism must be the true doctrine of the universe. I assume that no other theory is feasible. Theism is either Pantheism, Polytheism, or Monotheism. *Atheism denies alike the reasonableness of Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism.*"

In face of this, our friend says Atheists have no theory of the universe—that is, I presume, no constructive theory. They can criticise another theory, but, when it comes to actual building up, Atheists find they have no foundation on which to rest, and, like the man who built upon the sand, the first blast of the storm topples the structure to the ground. (Applause.)

Mr. Bradlaugh says, on page 3: "If Monism be true, and Atheism be Monism, then Atheism is necessarily the true theory of the universe. I submit that there cannot be more than one ultimate explanation." Thus Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who was a great authority on these subjects, is in distinct antagonism with Mr. Foote, for he (Mr. Bradlaugh) says Atheism *has* a theory of the universe, and, if that theory be true, no other theory can be.

I pass on to notice what Mr. Foote said last night, in reference to the relation between the brain and thought. He told us that, whenever he finds an organism in a certain condition, there he finds thought; but is it not a fact that, in some cases, where the brain cannot be shown to have any physical defect, no thought can be exhibited? Is it not true also that, where the brain has *many physical defects*, thought is not injured? I shall be glad if Mr. Foote will kindly answer these questions in his next speech, whether we are engaged in a Socratic debate or not.

Our friend said that, where he finds a given physical condition, there he finds thought. Now, Dr. Carpenter, in his *Mental Physiology* (page 110), says: "Further, it has been often established, alike by experiments on animals and by

observations on the phenomena of disease and accident in man, that the substance of the cerebrum is itself insensible —that is, no injury done to it, or physical impression made upon it, is *felt* by the subject of it." And Dr. Carpenter goes on to say: "It is clear, therefore, that *the presence of the cerebrum is not essential to consciousness.*"

So much for Mr. Foote's contention that, where he finds a certain physical condition, there he finds thought. Dr. Carpenter distinctly opposes that view. Indeed, it is agreed by all great mental physiologists that it is impossible for us to explain the passage from the physics of the brain to the facts of self-consciousness; while Professor Tyndall assures us that self-consciousness is the rock on which Materialism splits.

But Mr. Foote says that he denies my right to assert that matter has originated. I repay the compliment by denying his right to assert that it did not originate.

But what does Mr. Foote mean by the word "matter"? He has used the term several times. Every word I used I defined as I used it. I therefore demand an explanation of this word "matter."

Mr. Foote last night denied that he is compelled to think of something as eternal, and he spoke of the changing phenomena of this earth and the worlds around us, implying that an infinite series of causes and effects is the explanation of the evolution of the visible universe. That was the implication; or, if it was not, what was the implication? And if it was, then Mr. Foote *can* think of the eternal, for he speaks of an eternal series of causes and effects. But if we carefully analyse what is meant by an infinite, or eternal, series of causes and effects, we find it means that a long series of finite changes can make up a total which is infinite. This is opposed to common sense, educated reason, and the first principles of scientific induction. You cannot get an infinite total by the multiplication of finite units. Mr. Foote may try, but he will fail.

Mr. Foote goes on to say that he knows only the conditioned. Then how does he know it is conditioned? This is important. If he knows only the conditioned, how does he know it is conditioned? I must have that explained to-night; and, though we are not having a Socratic debate, I have a right to ask a question like this, and I demand to have it answered.

But, Mr. Foote says, Cardinal Newman, one of the keenest intellects of this century, saw certain things in nature which he could not understand, or reconcile with the idea of God. That may be so; but is it not rather strange that Cardinal Newman, with his keen intellect, was so thoroughly opposed to Atheism that he became one of those exalted souls who live in the very atmosphere of the realised presence of the living, eternal God? (Applause.)

But Mr. Foote says no man has a right to affirm what he does not know, and to affirm the eternal you must know it; but, in order to know it, you must be eternal. Now, this is a play on the word "know." Does Mr. Foote mean, by the word "know," *absolute* knowledge, absolute information, about anything? Does he mean such a knowledge of any given thing that nothing more can be added to the knowledge? If so, I deny that he knows anything in this sense. But, if I can have a *partial* knowledge of Mr. Foote, if I can have a partial knowledge of this table, if I can have a partial knowledge of this universe, why cannot I also have a partial knowledge of God? The very fact that we exist demands that something must have existed without beginning, that something must be eternal; and, whatever our theory of the heavens or the earth, or man, may be, deep down under every theory and form of belief there is this absolute fact of the mind—something must be eternal.

But, Mr. Foote says, if God exists, he does not need to be defended. No, he does not. But, when we find men trying to rob the nation of its belief in God, we come forward with our little reasoning powers, and, in the struggle

of intellect with intellect, and mind against mind, we shatter the beliefs of those who say there is no God. (Applause.)

In reference to my statement that we have certain bodily, mental, and spiritual appetites, Mr. Foote says: "Yes, I admit we have these appetites for knowledge; but have we not room enough in the universe to satisfy these appetites?" I say, No; and the *fact* that all the progressive races of the earth have not been content to rest in the universe is a proof that man is not satisfied with the universe. When he looks upon this universe, as it comes within the field of his vision, he sees upon its face the indications of a Being behind and above the universe—a Being to whom he must go on, and before whom he must bow. No, our friend has not shown that we must be satisfied with the universe which is around us; rather, we rise "through nature up to nature's God."

Our friend has referred to a sentence which occurred in the little poem* which I recited to you last night, in which the "*sweet kindness*" of God is spoken of. He said (and I think I never heard a more illogical argument in my life)—"Kind," said he, "when this God has designed thumbscrews and racks to tear and rend men?" God designed thumbscrews and racks! Why, it is man who has done this, not God. No, not God, but man, on the nature of whom Mr. Foote builds his philosophy, saying there exist guarantees of morality in human nature. Guarantees of morality in human nature! History and experience refute the statement, and show that, when man is astray from the moral Governor of the universe, these guarantees become guarantees of so many ferocious appetites, which wreak themselves on the weak, the defenceless, the poor, and the holy. The fact is, no trust can be put in man; our trust must be in the living, eternal God. (Applause.)

* This poem will be found at the end of this report, the reporter having omitted to take it down in its proper place.

Our friend says we cannot get thought out of the universe. I am not now referring to the idiot he brought forward last night, because we never said an idiot could get thought out of the universe. I simply ask Mr. Foote this question: If this universe is not intelligible, how can we have any science at all? Science is systematised knowledge, and, if there is no system in the happening of things, how can you have a science of the happening of them? But Professor Lodge, one of the greatest of living physicists, in his address before the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association, at Cardiff, made use of these words: "And I would say, have faith in the intelligibility of the universe. Intelligibility has been the great creed, in the strength of which all intellectual advance has been attempted and all scientific progress made." So, then, Professor Lodge, the great physicist, the great experimentalist, comes forward, and I put his statement as to the intelligibility of the universe alongside Mr. Foote's denial that it is so.

But we have another strange fact, and it is this: That this Atheism, of which our friend has been speaking, is a wonderful something; but he is afraid to say what it is. He says he will not allow me to define his terms; yet he claims the right to define my terms. But, if Mr. Foote will not give me the right to define his terms, I refuse to give him the right to define my terms. Our friend says: "Atheism does not mean denial of God; it means without God." But the history of the word and the use of the word go against the individual opinion of Mr. Foote; and I am here to say that the great masters of language have a right to be heard on this matter. If Mr. Foote wants Atheism simply to mean "without God," why does he not say he is an Agnostic, and have done with it?

But our friend says: "How can mind produce matter?" Will our friend kindly tell me what he means by matter? I defined matter as "the vehicle of energy." If that be true, then the universe is the expression of the will of God; and,

until our friend shows this to be impossible, our position is unshaken.

But Mr. Foote says: "Can God have designed this universe, when the law of it is 'eat or be eaten'?" I will deal with this doctrine in a few minutes, and probably I shall be able to eat it before I have done.

Our friend says, when I speak of motion being impossible in an infinitely extended universe of matter, I forget the different densities of matter. I do not. I say that you cannot have different density in matter where you have a perfect vacuum. Every particle of matter must be of the same weight in a perfect vacuum. If, however, the universe be *full* of matter, every point of space must be occupied. Therefore, there can be no space unoccupied. To talk of the *different densities* of matter is to say there is room in space, points where matter is not.

Our friend says he is not prepared to say matter is eternal or not eternal. That is standing on the edge—not going one way or the other; and, if Atheism is in that position, I do not envy it.

Our friend says he would rather believe in the eternity of something which he knows than of something he does not know. But he does not know matter; he knows only his sensations. In other words, *he can think of matter only in terms of mind.* Now, Sir, if you can think of matter only in terms of mind, the most certain fact is mind, and you reach matter by inference. You really know mind; you only *infer matter.*

Our friend says we have these perpetual discords and debates because we have not got at the facts; but the universe is all around us, and we are seeking to understand it. Men have understood it, and, in proportion as they have understood it, they have risen above the universe, and found themselves in the presence of One "greater than I, and holier than thou."

But our friend says he falls back upon the fact that man

cannot sound the depths of infinity. Nobody dreams of his doing so; but we do believe we can apprehend the infinite, and know it exists. We can know a little of it, though not all.

Our friend says the whole question of the reasonableness of Atheism or Theism resolves itself into analysing the claims of Theism. Oh, indeed! I deny this; for, if Theism be proven untrue as I represent it here to-night, it does not follow that Atheism is true, for some Theistic form of belief may be proven intensely reasonable. In trying to attack my position, instead of defending his own, as he ought to have done, Mr. Foote has simply been fighting, not for Atheism, but against Theism.

Mr. Foote defines Theism as "that form of belief which declares that the visible, tangible, conditioned universe is created and governed by infinite intelligence, which belongs to an infinite personality, and is characterised by infinite power and infinite wisdom." I agree with all that. And now I hope we shall be able to discuss something that is reasonable. I wonder whether Mr. Foote will say that a personal being must be limited? We shall see.

Meanwhile our friend asks: "What is the teaching of modern science?" and he answers: "It is Evolution." Very well. Our friend implied that Evolution has destroyed intention in the universe; and, therefore, having destroyed the design—the intention—there is no room for the recognition of God in the world. I hold in my hand the second volume of *Studies in the Theory of Descent*, by Dr. Weismann, probably the greatest of living Evolutionists, and this is what he says: "I believe that I have shown that the theory of selection by no means leads, as is always assumed, to the denial of a teleological universal cause, and to Materialism; and I thereby hope that I have cleared the way for this doctrine, the importance of which it is scarcely possible to over-estimate. Mechanism and teleology do not exclude one another; they are, rather, in mutual agreement. With-

out teleology there would be no mechanism, but only a confusion of crude forces; and without mechanism there would be no teleology, for how could the latter effect its purpose?" Against Mr. Foote's statement I place this quotation from Dr. Weismann.

But our friend says he cannot imagine a God designing a world in which "eat or be eaten" is the law of existence. Our friend forgot to tell us how he gets this fact of "eat or be eaten." In other words, he got the eater before he got the life to eat; and I want to know where he gets the life before he gets the eater. But if this universe, or this world, is, as he described it, "one great cock-pit, running red with human slaughter," I ask him how he can reconcile this with his coming here to-night and advocating the teaching of Atheism, when this blind, mindless, cruel, biting, slaying machine, which he calls the world, grinds the lives, and blasts the hopes, and crushes the affections of those whom it has produced, *only to destroy*. No future life, no future good; but blindly, aimlessly, uselessly, simply to play with, it produces men only to destroy them, only to crush them, only to make them suffer. That, Sir, is the teaching of Atheism. But we Theists believe that, through these sorrows and sufferings, there is a great purpose being worked out—that God is working out a plan; and, until our friend can show that the plan is not being realised, he has no right to reject the belief that there is such a plan.

Now, if Evolution means anything, it means that everything which is, and which has been, has a purpose and a function; and therefore Evolution itself witnesses to the great Being who has arranged it thus and thus.

But is it true that this universe is a great, brutalising, "eat-or-be-eaten" machine? ("Yes," "No.") There are more smiles than tears in the world, more days of sunshine than rain; and, on a mere balance of probabilities, there is more good in God than evil. So that our friend has not in

any way got rid of the fact of these things witnessing to a Being who is actively at work in the universe.

Our friend says there are earthquakes, and I know not what besides. True, but think. We cannot get rid of the *facts*. Suffering is in the world, earthquakes are in the world; but in reference to human suffering, remember this, that nearly every instance, if not every instance, can be traced to the carelessness or the wickedness of the man himself or his parents. In other words, law has been violated, and violated law must avenge itself. If it were not so, we could go and stick our hands in the fire and let them be burnt off without pain; but the good God has given us nerves, so that when we feel the fire we should pull our hands away. (Applause.)

But our friend says that these things destroy, in his mind, the possibility of the recognition of purpose. Yes, but other great men have looked into these matters, and have come to an opposite conclusion. Take the case of earthquakes. I am quoting from a speech on "Earthquakes and Volcanoes," by Professor W. C. Williamson, and on page 235 of the book he says: "I have now done. I would only, in conclusion, again remind you that it is a short-sighted philosophy which sees in these events only calamitous instruments of destruction and evil. While there have been dark days in the history of the world occasioned by these agencies, on the whole their effect is beneficial." I could give you other quotations from this work if time would permit.

Our friend says: "I notice Mr. Lee has to seek the aid of spectacles." Yes. And he said: "I went to a great oculist recently, and this oculist said that the eye was a very imperfect instrument." Well, now, if this eye which we have has somehow been evolved without mind and intention, how is it this great oculist, with power to plan, has not given us a better one? Our friend quoted a great German author on the eye, Helmholtz; but our friend forgot to say

that, when Helmholtz had pointed out what he regarded as imperfections in the eye as an optical instrument, he concluded his address by saying that, if every improvement which he had suggested were put into the eye, it would render it *less fit* for its purpose than it now is; and he went on to say that no sane man would think of taking a razor to cleave blocks—he would take an axe; and that for the rough-and-ready work which the human eye was called to perform, it could not be improved. So, then, our friend has his own authority with whom to settle. But I want our friend to answer this: If it is necessary for an optician to make my glasses and his glasses (which cannot be compared to the wondrous mechanism of the human eye), does not the human eye itself demand a maker who shall be greater in wisdom and power than all the opticians on earth?

But our friend says we see men destroyed all around us. Yes, but there is this difference between the position of the Theist and that of the Atheist. The Theist does not say the man is destroyed. God has given him life, and God has a right to remove that life to any other sphere He pleases. He does not destroy the being of man, He simply changes the place of being, and, therefore, He has a right, if a man does not square with His demands, or if He thinks fit to elevate him to some other condition, to do it, because He is the originator of all life, and in Him only can life exist.

But our friend says there are diseases. Yes, even microbes. Again, I ask you to think. If we were travelling on your Midland Railway, so long as the engines kept their proper lines, we should say the powers in the engine were good; but if two engines coming in opposite directions collided, that power which was good would become an evil. Why? Because the arrangements which had been laid down for their safety had been violated, either by the carelessness or wickedness of man. Now, the vital forces of our body and of all living organisms God intended should

work aright; but men, by disregarding the laws of health and such like, cause those forces to be misdirected, so that, instead of healthy organisms, we have unhealthy ones. Yet, even here, God's goodness is shown, for it makes us more careful of our conditions; they are deputations from God's Sanitary Department, urging cleanliness on the world.

Now let us see what we have done. Mr. Foote has given us a series of statements. I have touched them every one. But the questions I gave him last night are still evaded; the propositions I laid down he has not refuted. Those propositions stand, those questions will be printed in the report; and if the people see the propositions have been evaded or not dealt with, and the questions have been unanswered, they will draw their own conclusion, and, like wise people, say Atheism can only attack another system, it cannot build up, it cannot defend its own. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have now, ladies and gentlemen, to call upon Mr. Foote to give us the first of four short speeches which have still to be delivered.

Mr. FOOTE: My opponent began by confessing to a disappointment. I am not surprised. It is what an Atheist generally hears from a Theist. It would be a curious thing if an Atheist were to deliver a speech which satisfied a Theist. (Hear, hear.)

I have further to say that the major part of Mr. Lee's speech to-night was simply a re-dealing with matters we discussed last evening. I admit his right, when he leads off, to determine the direction of the discussion for that night; but I claim the same right to determine the direction of the discussion when it is my turn to lead the debate.

Mr. Lee was good enough to quote from a debate of Charles Bradlaugh's. I fail to see a single word in what he quoted which was at variance with what I quoted from Mr. Bradlaugh last night. To use Mr. Lee's own words, I

should have been disappointed had it been so, because my estimate of Charles Bradlaugh was that, whether right or wrong, he was one of the most careful thinkers and one of the most careful expressers of his thought. Now, Charles Bradlaugh says in explicit terms, as I read to you last night, that Atheism does not say there is no God; and I submit that a man's explicit statement to that effect is of more importance than any inference which Mr. Lee or anyone else may derive from some other passage which he has penned or spoken, in written or oral debate. Here is a man's written and explicit declaration which cannot be evaded: "The Atheist does not say there is no God." The Atheist takes the definitions of God which are laid before him for his acceptance, and, finding that they do not fit in with the facts of existence, he contradicts them, because the facts contradict them. Now, if that is not an intelligible position for a man to take up, then we must admit that we use words in a totally different signification, and any further discussion, at least upon that point, is simply a waste of time.

But we were told that what Mr. Bradlaugh's statement came to was that Atheism denies Theism, including Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism. Well, I admitted as much in my opening speech, and there was no occasion to elaborate what was admitted.

It was stated by my opponent that Atheism had no foundation. It has the same foundation that anything else has, or possibly can have. The only foundation for anything, as Mr. Lee knows well, is man's knowledge. Mr. Lee also knows that there have been Atheistic scientists, like Professor Clifford, and that there have been Agnostic scientists (which comes to the same thing), like Charles Darwin, Professor Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, whose names will stand as high as any upon the Theistic roll that Mr. Lee can produce.

Mr. Lee wants to know what I mean by "conditioned,"

but Mr. Lee himself first introduced the term. In his opening speech last night he defined the universe as "the sum-total of all conditioned existence," and if Mr. Lee wants to know what I mean by conditioned, why did he not tell us what he means by it himself? I did not suppose there was going to be any quarrel over "conditioned." "Conditioned" means existing in relation to other things. All knowledge is conditioned, and the very fact that it is conditioned debars it from ever being infinite. Knowledge means discrimination, the separation of things, the marking out of categories of similarity and dissimilarity; and that means analysis, distinction, and classification. Knowledge is never complete until it arrives at definition. And to define a thing is to limit it, and, having limited it, you cannot regard it as infinite; consequently to know a thing is to define it, and to define it is to place it beyond the category of infinitude.

We were told, too, that Cardinal Newman, with his keen intellect (I believe the word I used was "the keenest *theological* intellect of this century"—I am not prepared to admit that he was the keenest intellect)—but Cardinal Newman, we are told, came to be a Theist. Why, he was brought up one. He never had the opportunity of becoming one when left to himself. And it is not a fact that Cardinal Newman felt that Theism was safe in argument. Cardinal Newman said to the Protestant: "If you submit the first principles of your faith to the criticism of reason, they will never stand the test." "Nothing," he said, "in religion will stand the test of discussion—nothing will escape dissolution under the play of the restless intellect of man." That is confessing that, if Theism were submitted to an analytical discussion, it could not hold the field, and must fall back upon the very grounds on which children receive it—grounds of authority and grounds of faith. Men do not become Theists, in the main, because they reason themselves into Theism; they are trained in it as children, and are

made Theists before they are able to judge for themselves. I was charged with "robbing the community of its faith in God." Robbing! that is a term from the Old Bailey.

Mr. LEE: I did not wish to use it in that sense, and, if it is repugnant to Mr. Foote, I will withdraw it.

Mr. FOOTE: Every man who thinks he has a glimmer of truth not only has the right to present it to his fellow-men, but is under a duty to do so. If a man finds, in listening to another man, that a belief which he thought true is only half true, or not true at all, instead of being deprived of anything valuable, he is deprived of something which occupied the door of his mind, and kept the truth out of it. When this intruder is removed, the truth can enter in the place of the falsehood that usurped its situation. (Applause.)

We were told, too, that there was no guarantee of morality in human nature, and that we must trust entirely to God; yet I find that some of the most notorious villains of our time have been well-known professors of religion. I do not say they were so *because* of their religion, but in the face of their profession, and in the face of the statistics of crime, it is idle to tell me we must trust to God for morality. Wherever a human heart beats with sympathy; wherever mothers love their children; wherever fathers protect them; wherever parents will, with their own lives, save the lives of their dear ones; wherever one man will rush to the aid of another—*there* is the guarantee of morality. Your argosy of faith floats upon the great sea of humanity. You declare that the water would dry up without your fleet; yet, if your fleet were to sink, the mighty ocean of humanity would roll on the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. (Applause.)

Now, we come to what has been said about my opening speech. Mr. Lee quoted from Weismann, and said that he put against Mr. Foote's views of design the words of a great German. But there is no particular sanctity about a

German. Charles Darwin was a greater than Weismann. Charles Darwin is universally allowed by the scientific world to be the greatest scientific intellect of the present century. ("No, no"; "Yes, yes.")

Charles Darwin says—I am quoting from his own statement, which may be found in his *Life and Letters*—"The old argument from design in nature, as given by Paley, that formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. There seems to me no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." There is Darwin against Weismann; and if you say they extinguish each other, then it leaves us where we ought to have been left—to a discussion on the facts of the case, without bringing in an arbitrary authority. This matter is not to be settled by authorities, or else what is the use of discussion? If authorities would settle it, you have merely to get books, see what the authorities have written, and then bow down to them. I do not follow that plan. I think for myself. And you are here to judge of the arguments advanced, and based upon the facts. It is nothing to say that one eminent man is on Mr. Lee's side, and another eminent man is on my side. All that counts for nothing. I do not believe in the truth of authority. I stand up for the authority of Truth. (Applause.)

Mr. Lee said that God's kindness had not made the racks and thumbscrews. But God's kindness made the men—made them what they were—and they invented the racks and the thumbscrews. Mark you, the racks and thumbscrews were not invented and used by Secularists or Atheists. They were invented and used by believers in God—("yes," "no")—and they were used in the name of God. ("No.") Now, if anyone were to commit atrocity in my name, and in my name were to take innocent men, whose only crime was daring to think for themselves, put them upon a rack and stretch every fibre of their sensitive frames, devising

apparatus to inflict agony upon every part of their being—if I could not stop it, I would denounce it, and disown all responsibility for it. Such things were done in the name of your God, yet he never stopped it, but let it go on. It is science and humanity that have put down the brutalities of your religion. (Applause.)

There are, says Mr. Lee, more smiles than tears in the world, and so he strikes a balance in favour of his God. A balance in favour of infinite wisdom, infinite power, and infinite goodness! And man strikes it! I can understand a balance to a man's credit; but a balance to God's credit! And this is the God I am asked to believe in. I cannot believe in a God like that.

If God makes poor eyes, and the oculist sees their defects, how is it—Mr. Lee asks—that the oculist cannot make better ones? Why, "making" is a term of art, and not a term of nature. Eyes are not made; human beings are not made; lower animals are not made; plants are not made; you cannot even make a crystal; you cannot make the crystallised frost upon your window-pane. The word in nature is "growth," and, if the eye has grown, it is God's method, according to Mr. Lee's argument, of bringing it into existence; and God is responsible for his handiwork. It is idle to say we have not the right to point out errors in a theory unless we have a better theory of our own. We have such a right. I may not be able to explain the universe, and I admit I cannot; yet, if you put forward a theory that is contradicted by facts which you and I alike admit, I have a right to say that, whatever may be the *true* theory, yours is *false;* because a theory which does not fit the facts *is* false, according to the canons of logic. (Cheers.)

Mr. LEE: You will observe that the questions which I put to Mr. Foote in my last speech have not been dealt with. Mr. Foote has not told us what he believes or under-

stands by matter; and the many other questions I put to him, which are really of vital importance from my point of view, have again been ignored. Things which we cannot deal with we ought to say we cannot explain. If Mr. Foote cannot deal with these questions, will he tell us so? For, if he cannot deal with them, and in so far as he does not deal with them, the Atheistic position is worthless.

My friend says: "My opponent commenced by confessing a disappointment." I did. And he says: "Of course, we cannot possibly expect a Theist to be satisfied with the *Atheistic* position." Quite so. But I was not confessing my disappointment with Mr. Foote's position. I was confessing my disappointment with the fact that Mr. Foote had not seen that it devolved upon him to construct something, and with his not attempting to vindicate Atheism. We have met here to decide which is the *more* reasonable, Theism or Atheism; but Mr. Foote has fled from Atheism as a man flees from the plague. *Disproof* of Theism does not mean *proof* of Atheism. I want Mr. Foote to remember that, as an Atheist, it is his duty to present something like a constructive system. He may say what he likes about Mr. Bradlaugh and my quotations from him. Mr. Bradlaugh distinctly says: "It [that is, Atheism] does not include in it any possibility of Theos or God." And he says by Theism —that is, the system I am defending—"I mean either Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism, and Atheism denies alike the reasonableness of Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism." If this is correct, then Atheism denies Theism; and, if it denies Theism, Mr. Foote has no right to say that it does not deny God, for, since Theism affirms God, the denial of Theism is the denial of God.

Our friend says Atheism does not construct. Mr. Bradlaugh says it does, and he enters into a written discussion—not a spoken, but a written discussion—in order to show that Atheism is the true doctrine of the universe. Now, if that is not constructing, then I do not know what construc-

tion is. I am bound to say that Mr. Bradlaugh himself seems to me to fail to construct anything, and all Atheists must share in the same fate.

Our friend says I used, last night, the word "conditioned." Yes. And I also said what I meant by it—(cheers)—namely, that which witnesses to something other than itself, and demands for its existence some other thing. Now, Mr. Foote has no right to say that we do not explain our words where we take every care to explain them. But Mr. Foote says that by conditioned he means "existing in relation to other things"; but this universe is one, not many. Then what does this witness to, what is it in relation to? If in relation to something, what is that something? If not in relation to something, then it has no relation at all; and, if it has no relation at all, then it is not conditioned, and you do not know it, for you know only the conditioned.

Our friend quotes a number of scientists, Darwin and others, and he says these men were men who believed in Atheism or Agnosticism. I say that these men, almost without exception, repelled the charge of Atheism. Tyndall said that this word was affixed to him unfairly, and repelled it. Huxley has rejected the name again and again, Darwin never said he was an Atheist, and not one of the men to whom reference has been made ever said he was an Atheist. In order to show their humility, they took up the position that they did not know whether there is any God, but they did not say there is none, and they did not try to prove there is none; they simply said they did not know. So our friend failed altogether even in his references to these men.

But our friend says, in reference to the problem of knowledge, that knowledge is only relation. Very well. If knowledge is only relation, and this universe is one, and, therefore, according to your position, is not relative to any other thing, how can you, a part of the universe, be conscious of another part, unless that other part be other than yourself; and if that other part be other than yourself, then you are in

relation to something; and, if you are conditioned by that something which possesses the same nature as yourself, that something must be conditioned, and that conditioned something must witness to another existence which is not conditioned. Our friend will see that if we have that one substance which Mr. Bradlaugh understood by Monism, you can have no relationship at all, and, therefore, knowledge drops out of the mind.

In reference to Cardinal Newman, that keen *theological* intellect (I think Mr. Foote emphasised *theological.* But because it is a theological intellect, does it alter the intellect? Is not an intellect equally reliable in theological as in scientific inquiries?), who was only too pleased to confess himself enrapt by a presence higher and greater than himself. "Yes," says Mr. Foote, "but he was born and trained amid Theistic influences." True. But, Mr. Foote, according to your theory, every child is born an Atheist; according to your theory, every man that has ever lived was born an Atheist. Then how came the idea of God into the world at all? (Cheers.) If a man has to be taught there is a God, then God must have taught the first man, and to say that this is not so is to say that the law of evolution has been broken. The law of evolution means continuity—the constant unravelling and unrolling of what was previously hid; but, if Atheism is true, the recognition of God is a great spring with no continuity in it—a spring across a chasm; it is a miracle in mind, and requires a great supernatural power to make that miracle possible. So that our friend has another question to deal with. Where did the idea of God come from if it has to be taught? Perhaps Mr. Foote will pass this over without reply.

Our friend says, in reference to my statement that guarantees of morality do not exist in human nature, that God made this nature. Ah, yes, He did. God made man upright; but he has sought out many devices. Men have thrust God away from them as far as they can, and, turning

to this earth, and this earth alone, and fixing their affections and their minds on things of time and sense alone, they have thought themselves to be part and parcel of a brutalising world; and so they have crushed and torn each other, not because of God, but because their hearts have been opposed to God.

God, our friend says, has allowed this to occur, and, in a very thrilling statement, he said: "Now, if any man were to injure another in my name, if I could not stop it, I would denounce it." Yes, and the great God has put into men a power of mind which we call conscience, and that power of mind has bitten men like a serpent when they dared to break the law of God's world, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." (Applause.)

Our friend says God has not interfered in this world. We have no right to go into the question of revelation to-night, but we believe God has interfered. But our friend, Mr. Foote, does not believe in God because he has not interfered to stop certain cruelties; and when he did interfere for the salvation of man from sin, our friend denied that he had interfered at all! This is a very strange contradiction, and a very strange position to be in. (Derisive laughter.)

Mr. Foote referred to Weismann, and seems to imagine that I thought there is a strange charm in a *German* scientist.

Mr. FOOTE: I said there is no magic in a German name.

Mr. LEE: That implied the same. The reason I emphasised that Weismann was a German was that a great deal of our philosophy and science comes from Germany. The foremost thinkers in Europe to-day are to be found in Germany; great experimenters and observers in Germany have given to the world facts, and inferences from facts, which English and other thinkers have been careful to follow out. That is why I emphasised German.

But our friend says that these quotations from Weismann

can be met by others from Darwin. Darwin denies that the argument from design can ever be held again as a proof of God. That is very strange, for Professor Huxley distinctly rejects that notion, and tells us that the teleologist—that is, a man who believes in design in nature—can always push the evolutionist, and ask him how it is that evolution happens to do these wonderful things; so I put Professor Huxley against Darwin.

But our friend says: "I am not going to appeal to authority. Eminence counts for nothing." I beg your pardon; it counts for much. Neither Mr. Foote nor myself—and I say this without the least disrespect for Mr. Foote, because no one has a greater appreciation of Mr. Foote's abilities than I have—but neither Mr. Foote nor myself has the right to speak about these facts without adducing the testimony of a man of eminence who knows all about them; and therefore we appeal, not to the authority of these men, but to the facts which these men produce; and we bring these facts forward, and, by the use of that reason which Mr. Foote glorifies, we infer from these facts certain conclusions, which are in favor of belief in God, and not against such belief.

But our friend says that God's kindness made the men who invented the rack and the thumbscrews, and such like. ("No.") I want to refer to that once more. These things exist; but, before you can say they ought not to exist, you must know all about the universe—you must know what is right for all the universe—and whether the forces to make this right are really now in operation, or whether better forces could be in operation. In other words, in order to re-judge the mechanism of the universe, you want an infinite mind and infinite knowledge, and neither Mr. Foote nor I possess them. Therefore, I say, when we see these blemishes, we must look for a meaning in them, and, if we can find a meaning in them, then the blemishes must be read through the meaning.

A word as to Darwin and his *Descent of Man.* Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of Evolution, has gone into the question of suffering very thoroughly, and, in his work on *Darwinism*, he shows, in some three or four pages, that what Mr. Foote has attempted to establish on that point to-night is not what is in nature, but what exists only in Mr. Foote's mind. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: We have now reached the final stage of this debate. I am about to call upon Mr. Foote to give us his last contribution to it; and I would take the liberty of again saying that he is entitled, and I hope will receive, your careful and courteous attention. It is more than probable—I do not say I expect it—that he will adduce arguments and make statements which may trouble the minds of some who listen to them; but I will again remind such persons that they will, on this occasion, have the opportunity of hearing the final word from their own champion.

Mr. FOOTE: My attention is drawn to the fact that no new matter is to be introduced into the last speech. That is a point which my opponent must be careful about, as he has got the last speech, not I. My position is one which I generally find the Atheist has to accept. Theism, of course, is true, and Atheism, of course, is false; yet Theists usually feel the advantage, even in the case of truth against error, of having the last word.

Now, with respect to Germany, I do not object to Germany; my only surprise was that "German" should be put before "science," as it was. Science is not English, French, German, or of *any* nationality. Science is universal. Science speaks an universal language when it speaks fact and truth. And I deny that all our English science and philosophy comes from Germany. It is a libel upon England. Charles Darwin, the greatest biologist of this

century, was an Englishman; and I thought last night we heard the name of a man that Mr. Lee ventured to call the greatest of physicists—Balfour Stewart—who, I believe, was a Scotchman, and that is pretty near to an Englishman.

Mr. Lee says I have not noticed many things he said. That is possible; it is possible that I might say the same thing of him. ("No, no.") What you declare to be impossible I make possible by saying it. Mr. Lee talks about the printed debate. Well, I do not want to be reminded of that; I am content to abide by the printed debate. You see that sort of thing cuts two ways. ("Answer the question," and "Order, order.") I am answering what Mr. Lee chose to say, and I will answer what he said in my own way, and not in any way dictated by any member of this audience. (Cheers.)

Mr. Lee talked a great deal last night about matter, and I did not quarrel with his definition; and, as there was no quarrel about the definition of matter, why on earth should the point of definition be raised again to-night? There is no necessity for a fresh definition until we have objected to each other's definitions. If Mr. Lee is anxious about another definition of matter, I tell him that, to my mind, matter is the substance of all phenomenal changes which we ascertain from sensation. But there is really no necessity for the definition being given at all when there is no quarrel whatever about definitions in relation to this particular matter.

Mr. Lee once more complains that Atheism does not construct something. I tell him again that, in my judgment, Theism does not construct any more than Atheism constructs. Theism is merely a speculation, and that speculation can only be linked on to construction through systematic religion, taught, not as Theistic speculation, but as God's commands to men to guide them in their walk through life; and that is, properly, no part of Theism, but always has to be derived from what is called Revelation.

Then, again, Mr. Lee says that Atheism and Agnosticism are different. What is the difference? It is very largely the difference between courage and timidity. I have defined—rather ironically, it may be, but I may repeat it as I have said it before—I have defined an Agnostic as an Atheist with a tall hat on; and really Agnostics, who, as Mr. Lee says—giving the names of Huxley and Spencer—declare they do not know there is a God, are, to all intents and purposes, in the same position as the Atheist. If they do not *know* there is a God, it is clear that they are *without* God, and to be without God is to be an Atheist.

Then we were told that God made man, but man's heart went astray and was opposed to God. ("Oh.") I should be sorry to misrepresent Mr. Lee.

Mr. LEE: The words were "but man has sought out many devices."

Mr. FOOTE: That is not the expression I was referring to. Mr. Lee said that man's heart had got opposed to God. I should be sorry to misrepresent him, but that is what I have written down, and what, I think, I heard—at any rate, it is the substance of what Mr. Lee said upon this point. Just take a human father and his child. If a child of mine go astray, and I have fulfilled all my duties towards him, I am not responsible for his wandering; because, in bringing him into the world, I was not able to determine absolutely his intellectual and moral character. But if a father *could* absolutely determine the intellectual and moral character of his child, and that child went astray, the father would be responsible for not exercising his power. (Applause.) God is not in the position of an earthly father. An earthly father works under what to us, however inscrutable, are laws of heredity; for a child is not simply the child of his father, he is a child of his father's father, and his mother's father, and their mothers and fathers. Heredity

is not confined to one generation; it sweeps through the history of the race. The individual parent is often baffled by it; there is a power greater than his own—the power of the whole past of the race over the present generation. But your God, on your theory, *can*, if he pleases, absolutely determine the mental and moral character of every child brought into the world. And, if man's heart goes wrong and gets opposed to God, God does not exercise the infinite power you say he possesses over his creatures.

We were told that there is a purpose in suffering. Easy words to utter! but they carry no balm of consolation to my mind. I have witnessed suffering: I have felt a little, and witnessed much. I have experienced mental suffering. I have been made to suffer by the religion, or the professors of the religion, that Mr. Lee advocates. This suffering is a grim fact. You say there is a purpose in it. Tell us what you mean by a purpose. A purpose must have some sort of explanation. Do not call it a purpose unless you can give us some indication of what the purpose is. The general theory is that suffering is for the education, and chiefly the moral education, of the race. Ah, but it gets distributed in the wrong way. And there comes a time when suffering, instead of helping you, thrusts you down, degrades you, brings you to impotence, abjectness, and despair. If the suffering is for education in ethics, how is it that the very poorest, who, by the hard labour of their lives, are under less temptation than the idle or luxurious, get by far the most of it, while the idle and luxurious frequently go scot free? I see no purpose in this at all. Why, we actually band ourselves together to abolish or diminish the very suffering which you say is so beautifully designed. God has a purpose in inflicting it, and we put the sufferers into a place we call a hospital, and we say to the men of science "fight it." We appoint nurses, and we say to them "fight it." We ask the public at large to find the money to assist in doing away with it. God is sending the suffering for moral

purposes, and we are striving to abolish it, and so to prevent the ethical education which you say God intends by his inflictions.

God, we are told, has a right to take the life he sends. For the sake of argument I will not impugn that. There is no time to discuss it. But, assuming that God has the right to take life, let us see how it works out. Under the law we have a right to take life. A criminal is tried and sentenced to execution. But society insists that, if he is to be killed, he shall be killed in the most painless manner possible. We insist that the hanging shall be done with the utmost dispatch. In America they are trying whether electricity is not even less painful than hanging. In short, although we must (as we say) kill (though I doubt if anybody has that right), still, if we must kill, we are refined enough to say we must kill swiftly and painlessly. But that is not God's method; what we see in nature is not *swift* killing; it is *slow* killing. When man is killed by "the act of God," it is often done very slowly; not in a moment as by the hangman's noose or by electrocution. A lingering disease comes on and kills him week by week, month by month, and year by year. It is an agonising form of cruelty. If God has the right to take life, I deny that he has the right to take it in that way. If life must be taken, it should be taken swiftly and painlessly. All this cruelty in nature, all this killing of human beings by slow disease and long agony, gives the lie to the statement that your God is a being of infinite kindness and love.

Mr. Lee says that I object to revelation because I am told that God *does* interfere in the world, and that I object to Theism because God *does not* interfere in the world. He says that is a contradiction. There is no contradiction; it is a harmony. I object to Theism, because God does not interfere to prevent injustice, cruelty, and suffering. You try to justify his non-interference. Afterwards you offer me a revelation, in which he does interfere. The contradiction

and discord are, therefore, on your own side; and my position is consistent throughout.

But I am to tell you how the idea of God came! Well, the idea is of slow growth. What you Theists call God is not the conception of God which is entertained in lower stages of mental culture. Man begins by ascribing to the universe like thoughts and feelings with his own. He fancies that the leaf, which is blown along, moves by some power akin to his. He fancies he sees in the lightning, and hears in the thunder, the wrath of some outraged being; and he falls prostrate, beseeching that he may be saved. When we understand these things, that sentiment vanishes. The man who knows what a thunderstorm is, instead of falling and crouching, will stand erect, and his whole being will dilate with the splendour of the spectacle.

Man goes on, and works out for himself, as he advances, a multiplicity of deities—all beings like himself; bigger, greater, but like himself. And, as he learns more of the universe, and finds there is a general interdependence, finds there is regularity, finds that things happen in a definite order, he places one supreme God over the mob of Gods, as one noble out of the old aristocracy rose to the position of constitutional monarch. Then this one God becomes *the* God, the *great* God. The others drop away, and he is left the survivor of all the multitude that have perished; and my opinion is that he will go too.

Mr. Lee says the idea of God came in by God's telling the first man, and yet Mr. Lee talks about evolution as if he accepted it! You cannot understand evolution if you talk about the first man; it is a contradiction to all the teaching of evolution. "The first man" is the language of those who believe in the Bible. There never was a first man, according to Darwinism. Evolution works through natural species, and not through supernatural individuals.

But I am told I have only one minute before this debate

(so far as I am concerned) must be brought to a close. I do not expect that what I have said in this debate will have pleased everybody. All I can say is that it was my duty to say what I thought necessary. I took my own position and defended it, and attacked what Mr. Lee himself advanced. The world moves by this constant agitation. You find sound water in the eager, flowing current. The still pool is stagnant and loathsome. And when the air gets overcharged at times, we see the beautiful spectacle of the lightning. But you cannot have the lightning without the clash of the thunder-clouds. And when we differ in opinion we have these friendly meetings, so that out of the thunder-clash of debate there may leap forth the lightning of truth. (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: In fifteen minutes more this debate will be brought to a close. That space of time will be occupied by Mr. Lee, whom I now call on.

Mr. LEE: I do not know whether I understood Mr. Foote to say that Theists like the last word. If I did understand him to say that, may I remind him that he suggested that I should open the first night, and he would open the second night? That is not my arrangement, but his. So, then, our friend has made a mistake in saying I *like* the last word.

Our friend says that the putting of the word "German" before the word "science" was what he quarrelled with, because science is universal. It does not belong to Germany or England; it is universal. If science is universal, then knowledge is universal, and the great Scientific Being—if you will allow me to use the word—must be an universal Knowing Being; and that Being can be no other than God. The truth is that, out of all the scientific facts to be found everywhere in nature, we can get lines of evidence which lead up to one great fact—God is, and God reigns.

But our friend says it is an insult to England to say most

of our science comes from Germany. I say it is not an insult to say that which is true; and, if this is true, it is not an insult, and all the great thinkers in England to-day would, I think, confess that the vast mass of our scientific thought and philosophy has been handed to us from the Germans.

But our friend referred to a great man whom I quoted last night—Balfour Stewart. Alas! Balfour Stewart is dead. He died in the year 1887, I believe; but, before he died, he wrote me a letter, which I have here on this platform to-night, in which he gave me his scientific belief as to the point which I have been seeking to establish—that science leads to a recognition of God. Our friend admits this is a great man, and this great man holds that science leads to God.

Our friend says I referred to him as not having noticed many things, and that he can repay the charge. I always think it is wise, when statements are made, to specify the facts. In all the charges which I have made as to Mr. Foote's not having dealt with my positions, I have said what those positions are. My questions are not answered, and my propositions have not been dealt with; and Mr. Foote has not shown one single argument in his speeches which I have not dealt with. Why has he not done so?

Our friend says that he does not wish to be informed there is to be a printed report of this debate. I did not wish to inform Mr. Foote of that; I wished to inform the audience, so that the audience may know, and get the debate when it is printed, and carefully think it over; and this action I am sure Mr. Foote will endorse.

Our friend says: "Mr. Lee talked a great deal about matter, and I took no exception to his definition of matter; therefore it was not necessary for him to bring up this question until I did." It was because Mr. Foote was using the word "matter" in connections which my meaning of the term would not allow, and therefore it was necessary for me

to ask for a definition; and Mr. Foote, in answer to my request, ought to have given me a definition. But we have it now, and it comes to this—matter is the substance of all the phenomena which come under his sensations. But what are your sensations? Sensations are not matter; they are the *mind's* recognition of material existences and connections. Then there is something other than matter; and the thing for which I have been contending, the recognition of *mind* as a separate entity and substance, is now established in the confession of Mr. Foote. (Applause.)

Mr. Foote says that Atheism does not construct, any more than Theism constructs; it is a speculative system. But the speculation has shown itself in this way—that, while I have been brave enough to lay down a series of given propositions, each of them leading up to another, and to construct an argument on definite propositions and evidences, Mr. Foote has not constructed any argument, but has simply been criticising the ideas and theories which he fancies represent Theism. So, then, Atheism, in the person of Mr. Foote, has not constructed anything. Theism, in the person of Mr. Lee, has constructed something; and that something has not been touched. (Applause.)

But Mr. Foote admits there is a difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. The one, he would say, represents courage, and the other timidity. But is it not funny that some of the men to whom he has referred as not believing in God are the men who write themselves down Agnostics, and, therefore, are characterised by Mr. Foote as being too timid to say what their belief is? Not by any means a flattering position to be in.

But Mr. Foote objects to the statement that man's heart is opposed to God. I am not sure whether I made use of those words—probably I did; but, whether I used them or not, they describe a great fact, and facts are stubborn things. Man's heart *is* opposed to God, for what has Mr. Foote shown us to-night? "Tell me," he said, "that a God like

this exists, and I denounce him." *His* heart is opposed to God.

He says a human father is not able to control his child's intellectual and moral development. (Mr. FOOTE: "Capacity.") So that, while the father would save his children from going wrong, he has not the power to determine their going. God, he says, if He be what I say He is, has the power. I deny that. God has given to man free-will, and God could not—Almighty as He is, God could not—determine the ways of man without destroying man's free agency. But, in blazing star, in fragrant flower, in beating heart, in living conscience, God has shown to man that obedience to law is safe, disobedience brings destruction; and everywhere around us Nature cries with million tongues: "Obey law, and you are safe; disobey, and you are ground to powder." God, then, has given a revelation to man in the very make and frame of the universe, and in the very make and frame of his mind and heart; and, if man breaks that law, do not charge God with what follows —charge man. (Applause.)

Our friend says, If God has a right to remove life, I deny that God has the right to remove it by causing long suffering and agony; but are these long sufferings and agonies caused by God? Have I not sought to show you to-night that violated law must be avenged, and when you violate the law you are flying in the face of God, and, therefore, as a wise father will seek to educate his children to avoid these things in future, God seeks to educate the human race to do the same. Obey the law, and you will be blessed.

Our friend goes on to say that God does not interfere in this world. How does our friend know? I believe that God interferes in this world more frequently than we are aware of; and frequently, if God did not, as it were, reach out his hand to save us, we should be caught amid the wheels of this world and be crushed. God interferes more frequently than we imagine.

Our friend says that the idea of God was of slow growth, and he gave us a remarkable history as to how the idea of God grew; but, while the story was pretty, it was opposed to ascertained facts, for we know, by the science of comparative religion, that the first form of religion known to man was not belief in many Gods, but belief in one God.

Ah, says our friend, but in battles of this nature clouds come together, and in the shock the lightning flash of truth comes forth. Yes, yes; but what is truth? I feel sometimes, as I think of the sufferings through which I have seen some small section of the human race pass, that I also know something of suffering. I have seen my little ones taken out of my home and hidden in the earth; but to tell me, Sir, that I have been produced by a mindless, brainless, purposeless, heartless universe, only to have affections quickened in my heart, only to have children born and placed in my arms, and then for this blind, ruthless thing you call the universe to wreck those affections and destroy those lives, is to say that your universe is an incarnate fiend. But if there be a God, and that God possesses mind, intention, heart, my children are not dead—they live. And out of the shock of brain with brain, and heart with heart, there comes this truth: "Thank God, heaven is above all yet, and there lives a Judge whom no king can corrupt." (Much applause.)

Mr. LEE, again rising, said: It is now my duty, my pleasurable duty, to move that the very best thanks of this meeting be given to our worthy chairman for so generously, patiently, and ably presiding over our meeting on these two evenings of debate.

Mr. FOOTE: I beg, with the most profound sincerity, to second that vote of thanks.

Upon being put, the vote was carried by acclamation.

In response, the CHAIRMAN said: Ladies and Gentlemen, —When I assumed the chair yesterday evening, I told you I would endeavor, as far as my powers enabled me, to conduct this debate impartially, and secure for each disputant a fair, careful, and courteous hearing. I have striven to do so, but I take no credit to myself for that, for I have observed with great interest the desire you have all exhibited to carry out those instructions of mine which I submitted to you, and submitted with great respect. I can remember, ladies and gentlemen, when such a debate as we have listened to would have been utterly impossible. In the first place, the champions of thought were themselves exceedingly intemperate, and the passions which ran riot in the minds of their audiences were correspondingly violent; and the result was that too frequently these debates partook of results which were always disappointing, and frequently demoralising. I call you all to witness that this state of things has been vastly improved upon; great subjects have been discussed—ably discussed—with a due regard for the sensibility of the listener; and, altogether, it seems to me that those who have been privileged to listen to this debate must have derived enlightenment, must have derived pleasure, and, I hope, a good deal of useful information. I congratulate both disputants on the zeal and the obvious sincerity which have characterised all their exertions. I congratulate, also, the committee of management for having arranged the debate; and I further congratulate you, my fellow-townsmen of Derby, for having assembled in such large numbers, and listened with such obvious interest to the speeches which have been submitted to you.

(Poem omitted through Reporter's error (see page 61).

Who shall say that to no mortal
Heaven ere ope'd its mystic portal?
Gave no dream or revelation,
Save to one peculiar nation?
Souls sincere, now voiceless, nameless,
Knelt at altars, fired and flameless;
Asked of nature, asked of reason,
Sought through every sign and season,
Seeking God. Through darkness groping,
Weeping, praying, panting, pining
For the light on Israel shining.
Ah, it must be God's sweet kindness
Pities erring human blindness;
And the soul whose pure endeavor
Strives toward God shall live forever—
Live by the great Father's favor,
Saved by the all-sufficient Savior.

FULL REPORT

OF THE

TRIAL

OF

G. W. FOOTE AND W. J. RAMSEY,

FOR

BLASPHEMY.

Before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge.

APRIL, 1883.

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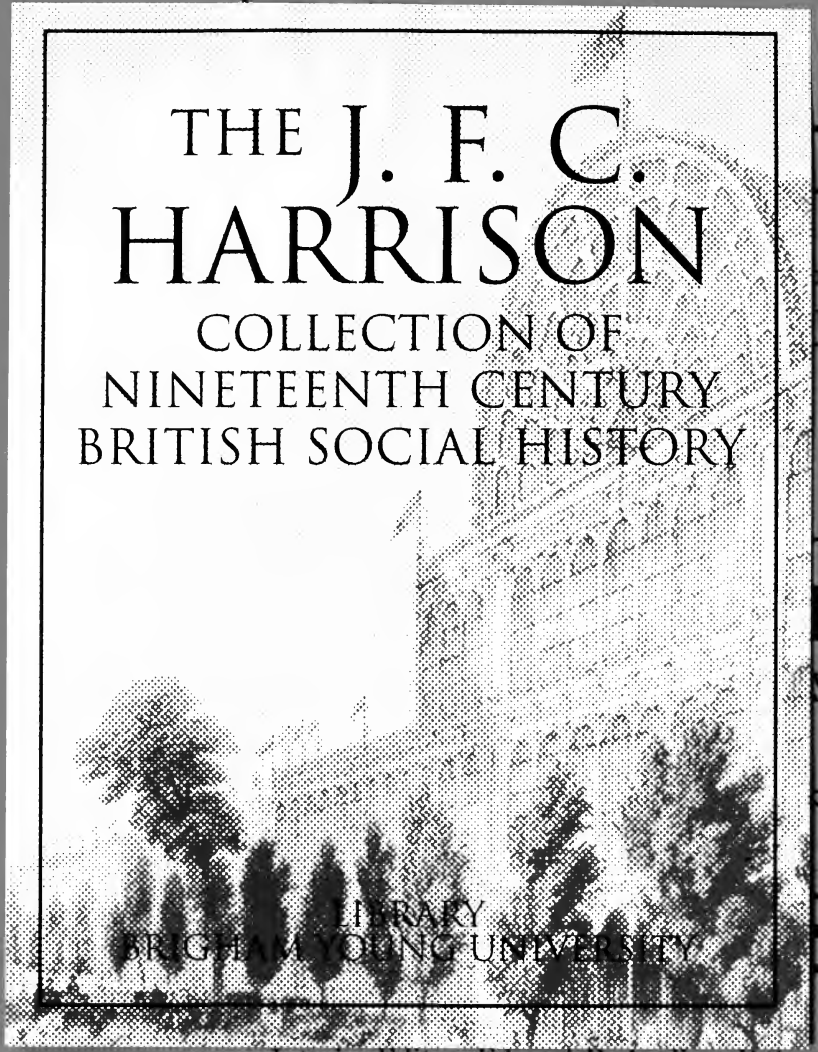

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THE PROSECUTION OF MESSRS. FOOTE AND RAMSEY FOR BLASPHEMY.

In the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice on Tuesday, April the 24th, the Lord Chief Justice and a Special Jury had before them the case of the Queen v. Ramsey and Foote, the registered proprietor and alleged editor of the "Freethinker" newspaper. The defendants were charged on indictment, removed into this court by *certiorari* from the Central Criminal Court, for the publication in the "Freethinker" of a series of "blasphemous libels," and on conviction were sentenced to imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. They were now brought up on Habeas Corpus, in charge of the governor of the gaol. A fortnight since the two defendants were placed on their trial along with Mr. Bradlaugh, for the same offence; but on the application of the latter, he was tried alone, the result being that he was acquitted. The present prosecution was directed against the two defendants, Ramsey and Foote. They pleaded Not Guilty.

Sir Hardinge Giffard, Q.C., Mr. Maloney, and Mr. Woodfall were counsel for the Crown. Mr. Horace Avory appeared for Ramsey, while Mr. A. R. Cluer held a watching brief for Foote.

Mr. Avory: My lord, before the jury is sworn I think it right to mention at once that I am told that there is some question as to who, under these circumstances, may be liable to any additional expense occasioned by the calling of a special jury.

Lord Coleridge: Whose special jury is it?

Mr. Avory: The defendant Bradlaugh moved that this case should be removed from the Old Bailey by *certiorari* to this court,

and it was his application originally for a writ of *certiorari*. That matter was disposed of the other day, and the special jury was charged with it.

Lord Coleridge: You are not quite accurate, Mr. Avory. The removal was by Mr. Bradlaugh; the application for a special jury was by Mr. Ramsey.

Mr. Avory: I did not know that that was so. There is another matter I should mention. I don't know whether your lordship is aware of the previous trial which took place at the Central Criminal Court. Although the defendants are not in a position to plead because the indictment charges other numbers of the newspaper than that on which they are convicted, yet in effect they have been tried, and those numbers have been given in evidence before Mr. Justice North.

Lord Coleridge: What has that to do with the present state of things?

Mr. Avory: I thought perhaps your lordship might put it to the prosecution whether the court should be occupied in trying the matter again.

Lord Coleridge: No, no. In any other case I should have made a great many remarks and suggestions, but I think it better to let this proceed in the ordinary way.

Mr. Avory: I thought it right, my lord, to mention this. I only appear here on behalf of Ramsey to watch the legal aspect, and I think it my duty to say that these counts should be quashed on the ground of uncertainty. I can give you the number of counts.

Lord Coleridge: I heard Mr. Bradlaugh upon this. If you mean to take those same points you need not reargue it.

Mr. Avory: I simply take the same objection, my lord, that they are bad for that reason.

Lord Coleridge: That is those which refer to the printing of the newspaper.

Mr. Avory: Those counts which say the defendants printed, published, or caused and procured it to be printed and published.

Lord Coleridge: I think there is nothing in that.

Mr. Avory: I thought it my duty, my lord, to take the objections.

Mr. Cluer: Before the jury are sworn, on behalf of the defendant Foote, I have to submit that the indictment should be quashed on this ground; that it charges a joint offence, and that it is conclusively proved, as Mr. Bradlaugh has been acquitted, these were separate offences, and in all cases where three are joined together for libel, the Court refuses to arrest judgment on the ground that the act was a joint act.

Lord Coleridge: Are you asking me to rule on the indict-

ment that three persons must be either acquitted or convicted. If you indict persons for a joint act, you can acquit all or convict one, and acquit the others. If you indict A, B and C, for doing something, and you prove it against A, it does not follow that you can convict B and C.

Mr. Cluer: They are charged with one joint act.

Lord Coleridge: It doesn't follow the jury will acquit the other two because they have acquitted one.

Mr. Cluer: I submit they cannot be put in charge on this count at all.

Lord Coleridge: I cannot agree with you there.

Mr. Cluer: One other objection to the indictment is this. In the 2nd, 4th, and 6th counts, the charge is in these terms. In the 2nd count, the charge is that of publishing a libel of and concerning religion. I submit that this is not properly stated as it does not say of the Christian religion. I submit there is no offence really to go to the jury in a count that merely charges an offence against religion. It must either be amended or the count struck out.

Lord Coleridge: I don't think so. Do you wish to put in "Christian religion?"

Mr. Maloney: No, my lord.

Mr. Cluer: I submit that that is void.

Mr. Maloney: If I consented to that, my lord, it might lead to something else.

Lord Coleridge: That is the introduction; the rest are merely settings out.

Mr. Cluer: It is four lines from the end—"and concerning religion."

Lord Coleridge: There is nothing in that. Now, what is your other objection?

Mr. Cluer: There is one further point I wish to urge. In the ninth count—it may be a mistake in my copy—of the indictment just before the quotation is made, a charge is made concerning the Book of Revelations as part of the Holy Bible. There is no such Book strictly speaking in the Bible, and I submit that should be amended.

Lord Coleridge: I think it is quite good enough.

Mr. Cluer: Such things have been held in other cases, and I submit it is a matter for amendment. The Book is of course the Book of Revelation.

Lord Coleridge: It is—to follow the words—"meaning the Book of Revelations as aforesaid."

Mr. Cluer: It has reference to something that doesn't exist.

Lord Coleridge: I cannot take judical notice that there is no such Book as Revelations in Holy Scripture.

Mr. Cluer: I have a copy in my chambers I can bring (Laughter.)

Mr. Maloney then proceeded to open the case for the crown. He said,—May it please your lordship, gentlemen of the jury,—the indictment in this case charges that the defendants William James Ramsey, and George William Foote, published a blasphemous libel in a newspaper called the "Freethinker" in various numbers of that paper between the months of March and the months of June, 1882. To that indictment the defendants pleaded Not Guilty, and it is your duty to try whether they are guilty or not. In the temporary absence of my learned leader, Sir Hardinge Giffard, it falls upon me to explain the facts of this case to you, and what has occurred already this morning. What has occurred previously in the history of this case will to some extent render my duty and yours, I hope, not a long one here to-day. I think the atmosphere has been cleared this morning of some of the technical objections which perhaps might have otherwise occupied some time. Mr. Avory this morning referred to something which took place, not with reference to the numbers indicted here to-day, but with reference to a special issue of the "Freethinker," the Christmas Number. This took place a couple of months ago, and resulted in a certain event respecting Ramsey and Foote. It is necessary, first, to narrate to you something of the history of these proceedings. Some of you have doubtless seen something in the papers about them before to-day. The prosecution in this case, of the defendants Foote and Ramsey, commenced at the Mansion House before the Lord Mayor on the 11th of July last. After the first hearing Mr. Bradlaugh was made a co-defendant, and the charge was investigated. They were committed to the Central Criminal Court, and the case was afterwards removed into the Court of Queen's Bench just before the long vacation, when the defendants entered an appearance in the month of November and pleaded Not Guilty. In December it was set down for hearing, and so it comes on here. That explains how it is that such a long time has elapsed since the commencement of this prosecution. After the case had been removed to the Court of Queen's Bench a special number of the "Freethinker" was issued, and proceedings were taken by the Corporation of London against that particular issue of the paper. The question you are here to-day to determine has nothing to do with anything that took place subsequent to the month of June last year. Prosecutions for blasphemy have happily been rare in London. Certainly in Middlesex, prosecutions for blasphemy have disappeared from the Law Courts for thirty or forty years, and doubtless it will be urged by the defendants in this case, that that was sufficient evidence to show

that the whole system upon which prosecutions for blasphemy were based is effete, and that persons should not prosecute for blasphemy now-a-days. But when you see the papers you will perhaps be inclined to conclude that prosecutions for blasphemy within the last generation have been unusual in London ; because there was no reason, because newspapers and books did not contain what was an ontrage upon the feelings of the community at large ; and I think when you see the libels they are charged with, you will say that this at any rate is a publication about the blasphemous nature of which there can be no doubt, or as to the propriety of stopping or curtailing its licentiousness to some extent. An event which has occurred since these proceedings took place, and which condemned the persons responsibe for the Christmas Number is an argument in favor of this prosecution as showing that it was time steps should be taken, and that the steps taken in this prosecution were not taken too soon. Doubtless it will be put forward that this is a political movement. I think they will have some difficulty, so far as they are concerned, in proving that. The defendants will find some difficulty in making you believe that this prosecution was commenced from political motives. The prosecution was commenced against these two alone originally, and it was only afterwards that a summons was issued against Mr. Bradlaugh. You heard that Mr. Bradlaugh was acquitted a week ago in this court by a special jury. I cannot recognise any of your faces as having been on that jury, but doubtless you know a good deal of what took place. Mr. Bradlaugh was acquitted on that occasion. There were two questions discussed by my lord, and what you will have to consider to-day is this, Does this publication come within the definition of blasphemy, a definition which I will shortly briefly avert to. The next question you will have to consider is, Are the defendants responsible for the publication of it? Have they aided and assisted in producing this paper from week to week and selling it? Those are the two questions you have to consider. First, is it a blasphemous paper, and are these incriminated passages blasphemous? Secondly, Did the defendants publish or procure these to be published? I don't mean in the ordinary trade sense—because one of the defendants, Mr. Foote, is charged with being the editor. The question is, Did they aid in sending forth this blasphemous matter either by editing, selling over the counter, being proprietors, deriving profits, or in any other way? The question discussed on the last trial was mainly whether the then defendant was responsible for the publication, and there was very little discussion whether the matter was blasphemous itself. I think here to-day the principal struggle will be not as to whether Ramsey and Foote are responsible for this paper, because the evidence I shall

call will bring conviction to your minds that Ramsey is responsible for the publication as he is registered as printer, proprietor, and publisher under a recent Act of Parliament, and that is *primâ facie* evidence. It will be for him to show you that he is not printer, publisher, or proprietor. I shall give evidence to show that Ramsey has sold this paper in the shop in Stonecutter Street, which was the publishing office of the paper and the publishing office of the *National Reformer*. After the proceedings had commenced at the Mansion House—and this may become important—a month or two afterwards, there were published other numbers headed Prosecuted for Blasphemy. There can be no doubt that Ramsey was active in procuring publication of the issues of this paper and these numbers. As to Foote the evidence will show you that from the time the paper began in May, 1881, down to a time subsequent to the dates in this indictment, he was the editor of the paper. His name appears on the front of every paper as editor, and inside the paper it is stated that all communications are to be addressed to him as editor of the "Freethinker," at his private lodgings. I shall call evidence to satisfy you that he was and has been the editor from the very first. On the recent trial of Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir Hardinge Giffard quoted what the law of blasphemy is, as it is very appropriately defined in a standard work on Libel, and that is the law of blasphemy which the prosecution here to-day will ask you to carry in your minds when reading the libels in this indictment. Mr. Starkie says: "The law distinguishes between honest errors and malice of mankind. The wilful intention to insult and mislead others by means of licentious and contumelious abuse applied to sacred subjects, or by wilful misrepresentation or artful sophistry calculated to mislead the ignorant and unwary, is the criterion and the test of guilt. The malicious and mischievous intention, or, what is equivalent to such an intention in law as well as in morals, a state of apathy or indifference to the interests of society, is the broad boundary between right and wrong." Now, gentlemen, when you bear that definition in mind, recollect that there is no attempt here, and if the attempt were made it would be useless in the present day—no attempt is being made to suppress free discussion or the liberty of the press, or to interfere with the just rights of any subject. Every person has the right in this country to discuss controversial matters so long as he keeps himself within the bounds of decency and reason. But when a person indulges in malignant scoffing, and abuse, and derision, gross caricatures, and parodies, flagrant insults, and outrages to the feelings of ninety-nine people out of a hundred in this country; when you see in this paper they have passed all the bounds of decency, I think you will come to the conclusion that this case comes within the definition of Starkie, and that it

deserves the censure of the law. You will have an opportunity of reading the libels. It is usual to read out the libels in court, but I shall follow the example set at the last trial, and I shall not read them and offend the people in court by so doing. I shall not read them unless compelled. It is somewhat interesting to find what Ramsey and Foote think of their own writings, and there are two passages in the sixth count of the indictment which show they knew what they were doing; that their intention was to outrage the feelings of the people of this country; that there was an intention to commit blasphemy and violate the law. They themselves say they intended to commit blasphemy. I read from the first portion of the sixth count, my lord. There is set out in that count an extract from one of the Atheistic sermons, which appear from week to week in this newspaper. I shall not read the infamous and loathsome comparison between the deity and Shylock given in that sermon, but in one passage occurs these words: "I am told that people are shocked at my Atheistic Sermons; their blasphemy is so terrible. Well, well, it is disgust which compels me to pen them. I do it from a sense of duty. I am fighting against the most disgusting book in the world. Don't expect me to speak gently of it. I owe a duty to mankind, and I will perform it. Godism must be destroyed." Such is the opinion Foote and Ramsey put forward as to the nature of the matter issued in violation of the law, and outraging the feelings. Then I come to another portion which is in the newspaper, page 158, of the 14th of May, and which is set out in the indictment under the heading of "Acid Drops." It is as follows: "The bigots of to-day are the rankest cowards. They will not proceed against any Secular leaders for 'blasphemy,' although our lectures and articles are full of it; but they are ready to harrass any less-known Freethinker who may be more safely dealt with. Down at Tunbridge Wells, Mr. Seymour, the secretary of the local branch of the N. S. S., has recently been singled out as a victim. He was cited before the Justices of the Peace, on Monday last, to answer the charge of having issued a blasphemous placard, libelling the Christian religion and the holy Scriptures. The 'great unpaid' committed him to the Assizes, which will take place about July, bail for a hundred pounds being required in the interim. No doubt the bigots fancy they will score an easy success. But they may find themselves mistaken. The Freethought party will stand by Mr. Seymour to the end, and the case will be fought through every stage. We are not going to let pious humbugs seize and imprison our members without a struggle, and we are prepared to protect the humblest Freethinker in the exercise of his personal rights. Secular Societies are not to be molested with impunity for advertising their proceedings in an orderly way, while the

Salvation mob is allowed to parade the street and to kick up a disgraceful row like hell let loose. Mr. Foote lectured at Tunbridge Wells a few days after Mr. Seymour received his summons. The papers will not advertise, the police had frightened all the bill-stickers, and it was given out that all who came to the Hall would be spotted. One or two local personages came to report the proceedings. Mr. Foote crammed his lecture with blasphemy, and challenged the authorities to prosecute him. But they haven't the courage. These bigots are a set of blustering bullies who are afraid of a fair fight; they like instead to get hold of some unprotected victim and kick him to death." That was Mr. Foote's challenge, "that he crammed his lectures with blasphemy and challenge the authorities to prosecute." In answer to that Mr. Foote is here to-day. He will have, I am sure, full justice at your hands, and will have a fair fight as he calls it. That blustering challenge of Mr. Foote's for the authorities to come forward and prosecute, is as much as to say that he and those behind him were stronger than the laws of this country, and stronger than the sense of right of the community at large. I read these passages to show you what legal view these gentlemen take of the stuff which they sent out from their office. They crammed their lectures with blasphemy, and a truer word was never spoken by Mr. Foote when he set out in that article that these lectures are crammed with blasphemy. He has told you before that their intention is to outrage the feelings of people and of the community. All this was not dwelt upon so much on the last occasion. The question then was, whether Mr. Bradlaugh was or was not responsible for this matter. The struggle to-day will be whether these are blasphemous, and the defendants will try to import other matter to get the jury to take a favorable view of the matter. Now I see my learned leader is here, I may say, I have dwelt so long on this case, because I bear in mind something that occurred when Foote and Ramsey were convicted at the Old Bailey. It seems in this case the defendants may not call any evidence, and there may not be an opportunity of my addressing you again.

Lord Coleridge: Is there no summing-up by the counsel for the prosecution in this case?

Sir Hardinge Giffard: Not unless the defendants appeared by counsel.

Mr. Maloney: I knew it was not usual, and I have therefore dwelt at some length upon these matters on that account. I think you will be inclined to think that though prosecutions for blasphemy have been rare, it was due to the fact that no such outrage upon public decency has been perpetrated as these; and that the time has arrived when some effort should be made by the public authorities, or somebody setting the public authorities

in motion, to stop this, and to prevent people who are passing through the streets from having their eyes shocked by pictures in shop windows. In conclusion, I would say that though the law has been often remiss, and is often remiss and slow, yet it generally ends by catching those who outrage it; and whether they challenge the law in so many words, or whether they go along quietly, using some other person to challenge the law on their behalf, the law in the end secures them and lays them by the heels. I think you will conclude that this is an instance upon which the censure of the law ought to be visited. The events which have put Ramsey and Foote in their present position will be taken into consideration by the Court. The censure of the law is what we ask for, and the censure of the law is worthily visited upon persons who make a profit in spreading such vile corruption through the country.

Lord Coleridge: Can you give me a shorthand note of Brother North's sentence?

Mr. Avory: Here are the shorthand writer's notes.

Lord Coleridge: I wanted to know whether in the sentence passed at the Old Bailey the subject matter of this indictment was considered.

Mr. Maloney: No, my lord.

Mr. Avory: My friend was not there, and therefore he cannot decide. You will find the evidence of Kelland, the clerk to the solicitors prosecuting. He then produced all those numbers charged in this indictment in evidence. Those numbers were handed in. He gave evidence as to the person of whom he purchased them, so that the evidence to be given here to-day was before the learned Judge who tried that case.

Mr. Maloney: The evidence was with a view of showing the connexion between all the defendants and the paper. Those numbers were put in evidence with the purpose of showing Foote's name was on them, and that he was charged in the month of July with having published them.

Mr. Avory: The point is that all the evidence that could be given as to the defendant's connexion with this paper was practically given upon that trial. The papers were actually handed in to the learned judge who saw every one of those numbers. There were none read in court.

Lord Coleridge: This case has been tried at the Old Bailey, and if Mr. Bradlaugh had not been connected with it, this would have been heard before the trial on the Christmas Number.

Mr. Maloney: It would have been heard at the July sittings.

Lord Coleridge: It would have been heard before the Christmas Number case.

Mr. Cluer: I have an informal shorthand note of the sentence,

but I can say from memory that what has been said by Mr. Avory is absolutely correct.

Mr. Maloney: The defendants, Foote and Ramsey, joined in the application for removal, and one of the reasons was that the fiat of the Public Prosecutor was too general—that is, as to the form of the fiat given.

Lord Coleridge: Was there more than one libel?

Mr. Avory: Different parts of the Christmas Number were made the subject of different counts.

Lord Coleridge: Very well. I must ascertain as well as I can.

The first witness called was,

Frederick George Frayling, who was examined as follows by Mr. Maloney:—

Are you a clerk in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions?—I am.

Do you produce his fiat authorising this prosecution?—Yes. [Fiat handed in.]

That is signed by him?—Yes.

Mr. Avory: I think it necessary to take the same objection to this fiat as was taken on a former occasion. The objection taken to it was that it was too general, that it did not name anybody, and that the fiat of prosecution should name the person. This appears to be a copy of a section of the Act of Parliament.

Lord Coleridge: Let it be read. [The fiat was read accordingly.]

Lord Coleridge: I think it is enough.

James Barber, examined by Mr. Maloney:—

You are Assistant Registrar at Somerset House—Registrar of newspapers?—Yes.

Do you produce the file of registration relating to the "Freethinker?"—I do.

Give the date of the first entry?—Friday, the 26th of November, 1881.

The date of the next entry?—August 2nd, 1882.

And the next?—February 7th, 1883.

Mr. Maloney: I wish, my lord, to point out when Mr. Ramsey is registered as proprietor.

Witness: The first registration is of William James Ramsey, who is registered as proprietor and publisher; place of business, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; place of residence, 20 Brownlow Street, Dalston, E.

And the signature?—William James Ramsey.

What is at the foot of it?—Printer and publisher.

Those words are printed?—Yes, they are printed in and not written, and he signs below them.

Was this form partly printed and partly filled in?—Yes.

Now, the next?—August 2nd, 1882. This return, also, has Ramsey as proprietor.

The next?—There is no place of business given in this return, and it differs from the other in that respect. The next return is in the form of William James Ramsey ceasing to be the proprietor. It is a return pursuant to the 11th section of the Libel Act.

Lord Coleridge: Just read that. Under the title of Newspapers—"Freethinker;" names of persons who cease to be proprietors—William James Ramsey; names of persons who become proprietors—George William Foote; occupation of new proprietor, journalist.

Mr. Maloney: Do you know in whose handwriting it is?—Yes, Mr. Foote's.

That is the defendant?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: How is this material in this matter?

Mr. Maloney: As regards Foote it will be very material.

Lord Coleridge: All this occurred since the indictment.

Mr. Maloney: It is after the indictment.

Lord Coleridge: That would not affect the state of things under the indictment.

Mr. Maloney: I think it would be evidence of his connexion with the paper and with 28 Stonecutter Street.

Lord Coleridge: Before the indictment?

Mr. Maloney: It would be some evidence of his connexion even before the indictment.

Lord Coleridge: Oh, no.

Mr. Maloney: I want it for the purpose of identifying Mr. Foote.

Lord Coleridge: I won't stop you about anything before the indictment. What has anything he has done since the indictment to do with the state of things before?

Mr. Maloney: It would show his connexion with the paper, his name being upon any issue of it.

Lord Coleridge: I have not stopped you upon that. I don't stop you up to the date of the indictment. I don't see what right you have to go to August 2nd.

Mr. Maloney: The way I put it is this. The name on the paper continued the same before the indictment and after the indictment.

Lord Coleridge: What have we to do with after? You must show at the time of the indictment he was connected with the paper. Things done after cannot be material.

Mr. Maloney: Suppose the defendant puts forward something—

Lord Coleridge: If he says and signs that he was connected with that paper, it is a different matter.

Mr. Maloney: If a man registers himself, his name being on

the newspaper from the commencement—surely that is sufficient.

Lord Coleridge: You want to show that this is against Mr. Foote. You want to show that he was the proprietor of the paper.

Mr. Maloney: No; editor of the paper.

Lord Coleridge: Well then, editor of the paper in July, 1882. Suppose this was the only evidence in the case, would you go to the jury as to his being editor of a paper in July, 1882, because he becomes proprietor in February, 1883?

Mr. Maloney: He is charged with being the man whose name was on the paper in July, 1882, and with being editor of it. After that charge is made his name continues still, and goes on in the paper until December.

Lord Coleridge: I am not dealing with that.

Mr. Maloney: If I find in the month of February, 1883, something which says I am proprietor now, is not it sufficient?

Lord Coleridge: If you want a signature, I agree with you. If you want evidence of handwriting, it is correct.

Mr. Maloney: The identity of the person is what I want.

Lord Coleridge: If you want proof of his handwriting, you can show that.

Mr. Maloney: I don't think at present I require proof of the handwriting, but proof of the identity.

Lord Coleridge: I don't think I can hold it as evidence at present, but I won't reject it. I have taken that signature as Foote's. I cannot say it is any evidence for the purpose that you wish.

Examination of witness continued by Mr. Maloney: Who came to register the paper?—Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey.

Both appeared at your office?—They did.

Lord Coleridge: Do you wish to ask anything, Mr. Ramsey?

Mr. Ramsey: No, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Do you, Mr. Foote?

Mr. Foote: No, my lord.

George John Lavell, examined by Mr. Woodfall: You are a clerk in the office of the solicitors to the prosecution, are you not?—I am.

You have purchased several numbers of the "Freethinkeer"?—I have.

Where did you purchase them?—At 28 Stonecutter Street.

Do you produce the numbers of the "Freethinker" which you purchased?—They are in court.

Will you give me the dates of them?—March 26th, 1882.

What was the date on which you purchased that number?—I don't know the date.

Could you give me anywhere about the date?—Somewhere about the date of the paper.

Was the next one May 21st?—No.

What was the next you purchased?—June 11th.

And when did you purchase the next?—On June 14th.

Are those the only two that you purchased?—I had purchased other numbers, but they are the only two I produce.

What time of the day did you purchase?—Between the hours of 11 and 4.

During the hours of business?—Yes.

Whom did you see in the shop?—I saw Mr. Ramsey in the shop.

Who was it sold you the papers?—Mr. Norrish.

How often have you seen Ramsey there?—I cannot say positively. I have seen him on more than one occasion.

Did you serve any notice to produce upon the defendants?—I did, on the defendant Foote.

And on the solicitor for the other defendant?—No.

That was the only notice you served?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: Mr. Ramsey, do you wish to say anything?

Mr. Ramsey: No, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Do you, Mr. Foote?

Mr. Foote: Yes, my lord.

Cross examined by Mr. Foote: You don't remember the date on which you purchased the number of the "Freethinker" for March 26th?—No.

How do you remember the date of your purchase of the number for June 11th?—Because I put the date on when I purchased it.

Where?—On the paper.

When did you put it there?—The same day I purchased it.

Where did you write it?—At the left-hand corner.

In what place?—In the office.

How is it you omitted to put the date of purchase on the number for March 26th?—I cannot tell you how it was I omitted to do that.

How are you sure in your own mind at all about the purchase of the number for March 26th?—Because the paper never went out of my possession until I had a conversation with my employer about it.

About what time was it?—About the date of its issue; within a few days.

How did you remember these two dates?—June 11th by my own handwriting.

How do you recognise the other?—Through having a conversation with my principal.

Although that was only a few days afterwards you could not

charge your memory with the date you purchased it?—It may have been a week afterwards, but I could not charge my memory.

You could not charge your memory for a week?—Not in this case.

Is your memory better in other cases?—Sometimes.

You served me with a notice to produce?—I did.

Where?—At Holloway Gaol.

Mr. Foote: That is all, my lord.

Mr. Maloney: The notice to produce was not put in. This witness served the notice to produce.

[Notice to produce put in.]

Edward John Kelland, examined by Mr. Maloney:—You are a clerk to the solicitors for the prosecution?—Yes.

And you purchased copies of the "Freethinker" at 28 Stonecutter Street?—Yes.

Will you check the dates. Which of these did you purchase?—April 9th, 1882.

When did you purchase that?—June 30th.

What is the next number?—April 23rd.

When did you purchase that?—June 30th.

What is the next?—April 30th.

When did you purchase that?—June 30th.

What is the next?—May 7th.

When did you purchase that?—June 30th.

What is the next?—May 14th.

When did you purchase that?—On the same date.

What is the next?—May 21st.

When did you purchase that?—May 24th.

What is the next?—May 28th.

When did you purchase that?—June 4th.

Mr. Maloney: That is all I ask you about the dates. Other numbers were purchased by you also?

Witness: Yes. There is another number, my lord, June 18th, which was purchased June 15th.

Lord Coleridge: No, no.

Witness: Yes, my lord. It was dated Sunday, but you can get them previously.

Mr. Maloney: Do you recollect whom you purchased them from?—Mostly of Ramsey.

Do you recollect the placards posted outside the shop?—Yes, I saw them.

And inside the shop?—Yes.

Contents bills?—Yes.

Have you seen copies of the paper exposed in the window?—I saw a number of May 28th exposed in the window.

Did you see them subsequent, or prior to the proceedings at

the Mansion Honse ?—I have seen numbers week after week in the shop window, but I cannot say for certain.

Did you serve that notice to produce on Ramsey?—Yes.

Cross-examined by Mr. Ramsey: You say you purchased most of the numbers produced of me?—Yes.

Do you identify any of those you purchased from me?—I don't identify any particular number.

How do you know they were purchased from me?—I can recollect I have purchased them from you.

By what means do you know you purchased most of them from me?—I can recollect you serving me; that is the only thing.

Did you produce those numbers at the Old Bailey when I was tried ?—Yes.

Were they handed in to the learned Judge ?—Yes.

Did you also give evidence that you had purchased them ?—Yes.

Mr. Ramsey: That is all, my lord.

Cross-examined by Mr. Foote: You have not told the Court of whom you purchased all the copies you produced. You purchased most of the copies of Mr. Ramsey. Did you purchase any of them from me?—No, never.

Did you purchase any in my presence?—No. I purchased copies one day when you were coming down stairs.

You have told the Court you may have seen me come down some stairs as you were purchasing a number?—I said I had seen you coming down stairs when I had purchased a number.

Before you said you may have seen me. Do I understand you to say you have seen me when you were purchasing one of these numbers?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: He did not say that. He said he saw you after he had purchased them, and when you had gone out of the shop.

Witness: That is so. You had come down stairs as I had just bought the papers.

Lord Coleridge: I correct you; it is better for you.

Mr. Foote: Thank you, my lord. (To Witness): Did you say at the Old Bailey you had only seen me once at Stonecutter Street, and that on February 16th of this year?—That is so.

Now, I ask you how you reconcile these statements. At the Old Bailey you said you had only seen me once at Stonecutter Street, and that on February 16th in the present year. You in your evidence now tell the Court that it is within a few months of your purchase of one of the numbers you now produce?—I beg to correct that. I made a mistake. I was purchasing copies as I usually do, and after I had purchased a copy I saw you come down stairs.

Let us understand. What day is it you are referring to?

Lord Coleridge: You don't mean that they apply to any of these?

Witness: No, my lord.

Mr. Foote: That was on February 16th?—Yes.

Mr. Foote: That is all I wanted, just to show that the witness had only seen me once, and that on February 16th in this year.

Mr. Maloney: Would your lordship kindly read on the front page?

Lord Coloridge: What is it you want me to read?

Mr. Maloney: On the front page of the paper is "Edited by G. W. Foote." Then in the inside, under notice to correspondents, "Literary communications to the Editor, G. W. Foote, 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London. All business communications to be addressed to the publisher, 28 Stonecutter Street."

Lord Coleridge: How is this at present evidence against Foote?

Mr. Maloney: My lord, I will call further evidence.

Lord Coleridge: At present this is only evidence against Ramsey. This gentleman says he bought most of these papers from Ramsey.

Mr. Maloney: At the end it says printed and published by W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street.

Edward Whittle, senior, examined by Mr. Woodfall:—Do you reside at 4 Coulthurst Road, New Cross?—Yes.

Are you a compositor?—Yes.

Where are you employed?—I work at 170 St. John Street, Clerkenwell.

Is that the office of your son?—Yes.

He is a printer?—Yes.

Do you know where the "Freethinker" is composed?—I don't know where it is composed.

Were you examined at the Mansion House?—Yes.

Were the numbers of the "Freethinker" put in printed by you?—No. To the best of my recollection the majority of them were printed in St. John Street.

You know that is so?—Yes.

At the office of your son?—Yes.

Do you know who was editor of these numbers?

Lord Coleridge: Oh, no. You cannot ask a question of that sort of this witness. Editor is a complex term. It may mean a variety of things. I may know Mr. Smith, say, as editor of the "Quarterly Review." I know that merely as a matter of social gossip. If I were asked in the witness-box if I knew who was the editor of the "Quarterly Review," I should say I know nothing about it. For the purposes of society I know who the editor of the "Quarterly Review" is, but I don't give evidence

in a criminal case of what I may know in that way. If I was a compositor, and Mr. Smith told me to compose something, I should say that.

Examination continued by Mr. Woodfall: Do you know Foote?—I do.

Have you seen him at the office in John Street?—I believe I have.

Don't you know you have?—To the best of my recollection I have seen him there, but I cannot say how many times.

Do you know to whom the proofs are sent?

Mr. Cluer: I submit the question is not a proper one.

Mr. Woodfall: Do yon send the proofs?—No.

Do you know the proofs are sent to Mr. Foote?—I don't know.

You don't know?—I don't know. I have no means of knowing.

Lord Coleridge: There must be some person who takes the proofs.

Mr. Woodfall: Do you know who takes the proofs?—They may be either sent by post or hand.

To whom would they be sent?

Lord Coleridge: The rules of evidence say you have got to make out your case. Of course the Court knows there are a variety of things you cannot prove in courts of justice.

Mr. Maloney: May I be allowed to ask whether he knew of any instance of proofs having been sent from the office in St. John street, prior to the month of July?

Mr. Cluer: That is the same question in a worse form.

Lord Coleridge: Wait a moment. Let me hear the question.

Mr. Maloney: Do you know what proofs are?—Yes.

Do you recollect proofs to have been sent prior to the date of your examination at the Mansion House?—Certainly.

To whom?—To Mr. Bradlaugh. (Laughter.) I don't refer to proofs of the "Freethinker," my lord. (Laughter.)

Lord Coleridge: You don't?—No.

Mr. Maloney: I asked you about the "Freethinker."

Witness: You asked me about any proofs, not about the "Freethinker."

Mr. Maloney: Any proofs of the "Freethinker"?—I don't know. (Laughter.)

You don't recollect whether proofs of the "Freethinker" were sent to any person?—No, I don't. They may have been sent, but not to my knowledge.

Do you recollect being examined at the Mansion house?—Yes.

Mr. Maloney: I call your lordship's attention to the first deposition of this witness.

Mr. Cluer: If Mr. Maloney is going to cross-examine his own witness, I shall have something to say.

[First deposition handed in.]

Mr. Maloney: Has your lordship got to the part, "I don't know who takes the proofs?" Then something else occurs, and I ask your lordship to permit me to read that.

Lord Coleridge: I think if you read that you should read the whole of it. He says, "I believe Mr. Foote is the editor of the 'Freethinker,' because I see his name is on the front of the paper. I have seen him at St. John Street. I don't know where the first proof is sent. I don't know who takes the proofs. Sometimes they are sent to Mr. Foote, I suppose. I do not know that they are sent by hand, 'Copy' is sent by hand or post. I don't know anything about the 'Freethinker."

Mr. Maloney: Will your lordship look at the end of the second deposition?

Lord Coleridge: He says this: "Do you really know of your own knowledge whether Mr. Foote was or was not the editor of the 'Freethinker?' I don't. I only have an opinion merely because I have seen his name on the front of the paper. That is the only conclusion I can arive at."

Mr. Maloney: Allow me to ask him about the proofs being sometimes sent to Foote.

Lord Coleridge: They may have been sent. Do you know as a matter of fact they have been sent to Mr. Foote?

Witness: They may have been sent, but I am not positive.

Mr. Maloney: Does he know Mr. Foote's handwriting?

Lord Coleridge: You know Mr. Foote's handwriting by seeing it at the office?—Yes, but not in St. John Street.

Mr. Maloney: You did not see his handwriting on any documents in St. John's Street?—No.

Where?—At Lisson Grove.

Where was that?—My son's office in St. John's Street, Clerkenwell, was a printing office. Lisson Grove was the printing office before we came to St. John's Street.

Lord Coleridge: There was composition done at St. John's Street, and printing done at Lisson Grove?—Yes; but not at the same period. Composing was done at both places.

Mr. Maloney: Have you seen matter of the "Freethinker" in the handwriting of Mr. Foote? You need not answer unless you please.

Lord Coleridge: Oh, stop.

Mr. Maloney: I told him he need not answer.

Lord Coleridge: Then why do you ask the question? You could not possibly suppose that was a proper question to put.

Mr. Maloney: I am thinking about the depositions.

Lord Coleridge: I have not seen the depositions. I know

nothing about it. I have not looked at them, except so far as you tell me. I see not a word about that here. All I have read of the depositions is those two bits I have read. I don't see how they will justify your question. I see nothing in these depositions to justify the question about his handwriting. Then, I really don't understand you. You first put a question, which I think any man at the Bar must know was improper and irregular; then you say it is not improper and irregular because it is in the depositions, and when I look at the depositions it is not there.

Mr. Maloney: I am treating this as a hostile witness.

Lord Coleridge: That doesn't make it proper. Cross-examination must be a proper process. You have no right to ask questions that are not evidence. You must know, in a criminal case, I should not have allowed you to ask a question which is not permissible. Have you, Mr. Ramsey, anything to ask the witness?

Mr. Ramsey: No, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Have you, Mr. Foote?

Mr. Foote: No, my lord.

Edward William Whittle, son of last witness, examined by Mr. Maloney:—You were examined as a witness here the other day?—Yes.

You are a printer carrying on business at 170 St. John Street?—Yes.

Look at those numbers before you of the "Freethinker." You saw those numbers when you were here last week?—I did, sir.

Were these printed by you?—Yes.

For whom?—Mr. Ramsey.

Do you know defendant, Foote?—Yes.

Has he been there in reference to the "Freethinker?"

Lord Coleridge: You cannot ask that.

Mr. Maloney: What has he done there?—He has come in reference to matters he had to give me.

Anything else?—With orders.

What orders?—For pamphlets I have printed for him.

Anything else?—No.

Do you use the word orders there in the sense of directions or in the trade sense? I want to know whether you mean directions or in the trade sense?—If he wanted a pamphlet he would come and give me directions to print it.

Mr. Malony: May I ask him if he has had directions or orders as to newspapers?

Lord Coleridge: I think you may ask about the subject matter of the indictment.

Mr. Maloney: have you had any orders in that sense of direction?

Lord Coleridge: You have had orders about some of those papers?—Yes, my lord.

Mr. Maloney: What was the nature of your directions?

Mr. Cluer: Were they in writing?

Witness: No.

Mr. Malony: Who would send the "copy," and say it must be set up?

Witness: Would be set up for what?

Mr. Maloney: The "Freethinker." Did the manuscript of the "Freethinker" come to you?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: Do you mean the whole of the manuscript came to you?—The majority of the manuscript.

Mr. Maloney: Did you usually see the manuscript of the "Freethinker?"—Yes.

Did you know Mr. Foote's address?—Yes.

That is the address in the paper, I may take it?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: What is the address?—9 South Crescent, Bedford Square, my lord.

Mr. Maloney: Is there a proof "pulled" before the paper goes out?—Sometimes.

Lord Coleridge: I do know what a proof is, but I don't know the other word, "pulled."

Mr. Maloney: "Pulled," my lord, is, I believe, the usual word.

Lord Coleridge: What is "pulled?"

Witness: Simply rolling the type and pulling an impression.

Mr. Maloney: Were you in the habit of sending proofs to anybody?—Yes.

To whom?—Sometimes to the author of the articles, and sometimes to Mr. Foote.

Is that the usual course?—Yes.

When you sent proofs to Mr. Foote, to what address did you send them?—South Crescent.

Did you send by post, or how?—Sometimes by post.

Sometimes by post, sometimes by letter?—Yes.

Has he taken proofs away on those occasions when he has been at your office?—I should say not.

Have any proofs come back from him which you had sent to him?—Yes.

Have any come back with corrections?—Yes.

Any come back with headings put in?

Lord Coleridge: I don't like to confine you too strictly. I take it for granted you are limiting your examination to the matters under discussion.

Mr. Maloney: Yes, my lord.

Mr. Cluer: That is not in the evidence of the witness as yet.

Lord Coleridge: Otherwise, I don't see that this is admissible.

Mr. Cluer: It is irrelevant, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Do I understand you that this happened with reference to these people?

Mr. Cluer: I submit the witness should have before him the specially incriminated article.

Lord Coleridge: Let us see, first of all, if he has anything to do with each number.

Mr. Maloney: Had you anything to do with the number of March 26th?

Mr. Cluer: I object to this.

Lord Coleridge: Had Mr. Foote anything to do with that?

Witness: Yes.

Lord Coleridge: What did Mr. Foote do in respect of the number of March 26th?

Mr. Maloney: Did the manuscript come through his hands?—I cannot say as to the whole of it.

Can you say as to the publication?—I cannot say as to the first article.

Lord Coleridge: What do you say of the first article?—That came from him.

Do you mean that the manuscript is composed, as far as the manuscript is concerned, by him?—Yes, my lord.

Is it in his handwriting?—Yes, my lord.

Mr. Cluer: This is not indicated, my lord. What page is that on—page 98?

Witness: Yes.

Mr. Cluer: Page 99 is the first indicated.

Lord Coleridge: Just give me the beginning.

Mr. Maloney: "That is the god whom Christians love and adore."

Lord Coleridge: Do you see the passage?—Yes, my lord.

What do you say about that passage?—I should not like to say where they came from.

Mr. Maloney: To the best of your belief?—To the best of my belief it would come from Mr. Foote.

Is it in the same article with the paragraph which begins "Friends and favorites of Jehovah"?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: Are these all out of one article?

Mr. Maloney: I don't know.

Lord Coleridge: Well; but really you should know. Is that all in one article?—Yes.

Is the manuscript in his handwriting?—No; it is signed William Heaford.

Then it was not in his handwriting?—No, my lord.

Mr. Maloney: The question I put to you was, through whose hands, or from whom did the manuscript come? From whom did directions come to insert it in the paper?

Lord Coleridge: First of all, did it come?

Mr. Maloney: That manuscript that came to you for the "Freethinker" would come from Mr. Foote?—I should imagine it does.

After it had been set up, do you know whether you sent a proof to Mr. Foote?—I should not like to say.

Have you any belief?—I have no belief about it. We don't send proofs of everything.

When a proof is sent out, is it printed on a slip of paper?—It is printed on a long slip on one side only.

Mr. Maloney: Now we will go to the next number.

Lord Coleridge: Stay; we have not done with this. You imagine it came from Mr. Foote. By whose orders was it put in the paper?—By those of Mr. Foote. (To Mr. Maloney): I protest against having to lead you.

Mr. Maloney: I was only afraid of going too far.

Lord Coleridge: That is perfectly legitimate. Of course, it is perfectly legitimate to put it in that way—— I am not prosecuting counsel.

Mr. Maloney: Now we will come to the number of April 9th. Had Mr. Foote anything to do with that paper?

Lord Coleridge: You have not got through your work. I will not help you any more; you must go on your own way,

Mr. Maloney: All the papers have been printed by you?—Yes.

Had Mr. Foote anything to do with that number of April 9th?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: That begins, "Joshua's first victory"?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: What page is that?

Mr. Maloney: Page 113, my lord. (To witness): Have you page 113 before you?—Yes.

You see "Joshua's first victory"?—Yes.

From whom did the manuscript of that come?—That is Mr. Foote's.

By whose directions was it printed in the paper?—Mr. Foote's.

Turn to page 116 of that issue. You will see a paragraph beginning "All those Christians." By whose directions was that put in the paper?—Mr. Foote's.

Do you know who is the author?—No.

Turn to the number of April 23rd. You see the cartoon on the front page?—Yes.

Had Mr. Foote anything to do with it? By whose directions was it issued in the paper?—Mr. Foote's.

Turn to the issue of May 7th, page 150. You see the paragraph beginning with "It strikes me god must have been suffering from bile"?—Yes.

Do you know who is the author of that?—Yes.

Who?—Mr. Symes.

By whose directions was it inserted in the paper?—Mr. Foote's.

Now turn to page 158 of the paper, that same number. Do you see an article there called "Atheistic Pulpit;" the first portion of it?—Yes.

By whose directions was that inserted?—Mr. Foote's.

Look at page 155, "Acid Drops." You see the paragraph, "The bigots of to-day are arrant cowards," and, going to the end, "Mr. Foote lectured at Tunbridge Wells, and challenged the authorities to prosecute him"?—Yes.

Who is the author of that?—Mr. Foote.

By whose instructions was it inserted?—Mr. Foote's.

Turn to May 14th, page 158; again, on the 7th count. Do you see the paragraph, beginning, "After Moses, Joshua was his favorite or vizier"?—Yes.

Do you remember who was the author?—Yes.

Who?—Mr. Symes.

By whose directions was it inserted?—Mr. Foote's.

May 21st, has an article headed "What shall I do to be damned;" page 162. Did you see that?—Yes.

Who is the author?—Mr. Heaford.

By whose directions was it inserted?—Mr. Foote's.

Page 163—"The mind turned topsy-turvy with fear and dread at the mere thought of the awful possibility of one of these rampagious beasts in Revelations lying down after dinner with the lamb of god inside him." Is that in the same article?—Yes.

Lord Coleridge: That is the same thing.

Mr. Maloney: May 28th, page 174. Do you see a paragraph beginning "The last day of damnation?"—Yes.

By whose directions was that inserted?—Mr. Foote's.

Turn to the front page of that number. You see a comic Bible sketch, "The Divine Illumination?"—Yes.

By whose directions was that put in the paper?—Mr. Foote's.

Is that a representation of almighty god?—

Lord Coleridge: Where does that begin?

Mr. Maloney: The charge is last in the indictment.

Lord Coleridge: That is for the jury.

Mr. Maloney: Now turn to June 11th. That question, my lord, rather goes to three of the counts. Would you allow me to ask this witness as to the picture?

Lord Coleridge: I don't think you ought to ask this witness, "What do you think of that picture." The picture tells its own story. You charge it as a blasphemous libel, and you say Mr. Foote ordered it to be put in. You can show it to the jury, but you have no right to ask this gentleman what he thinks of it.

Mr. Maloney: Did he authorise the cartoon of June 11th, "A miss and a hit?"

Witness: "Yes, I should say so.

Has Mr. Foote spoken to you at any time in reference to the meaning of any of these cartoons?—No.

Mr. Maloney: May I ask him whether he knows who was editor of those numbers?

Lord Coleridge: No; certainly not. That is a complex question. Editor may mean a great many things. A man may be editor, and not authorise the publication of any one of these things. I cannot help saying, Mr. Maloney, that this was suggested to you. I have eyes, and I cannot help seeing what is going on. You ought not to take suggestions that are not proper. This case must be tried like every other case. I have regretted to observe the feeling imported into this prosecution. On a former occasion I restrained myself for obvious reasons. Why cannot this case be tried, like any other case, without going one inch out of the legal path. Why does counsel go and examine a man's bankers-book.

Mr. Maloney: Will your lordship allow me to ask the witness whether Mr. Foote has spoken to him as to the person who was editor of this paper?

Lord Coleridge: If it bears against Foote or Ramsey, you have no right to ask it. (To witness): Has Mr. Foote ever told you who edited the paper?—No, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: That is a totally different thing. Anything Foote says against himself is evidence against him. Do you wish to ask anything, Mr. Ramsey?

Mr. Ramsey: No, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Do you, Mr. Foote?

Mr. Foote: No, my lord.

Mr. Maloney: That is the case, my lord.

Lord Coleridge (to defendants): If you would rather take your luncheon first, before addressing the jury, do so by all means.

Mr. Ramsey: I should, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Gentlemen of the jury, you must come back by half-past one.

Mr. Maloney: I didn't quite hear whether evidence for the defence is to be called, and I should like to know that, because of some of the official witnesses. I want to free some of the official witnesses.

Lord Coleridge: I cannot press these gentlemen; they must take their own course. If they think right to call witnesses they must do so.

After the adjournment for luncheon, Mr. Maloney said: In

reference to handing the libels themselves to the jury, I suppose that will be done at the end of the case.

Lord Coleridge: I should think so.

Mr. Avory: There will be no witnesses for the defence.

Mr. Maloney: Then I don't address the jury.

Mr. Ramsey then proceeded to address the jury as follows:—Gentlemen of the jury,—I appear before you to-day to answer this charge under circumstances of extreme difficulty. For eight weeks I have been in close confinement in prison, cut off from all participation in the active life and business of the world around me; away from home, from family, and all I hold most dear. With the exception of one short hour each day spent in pacing round and round a track in company with the vilest dregs of London criminality—whose very presence is like some loathsome contagion—and a brief visit on each alternate day to chapel—in the same company—all the time has been passed in a narrow cell in solitude and silence, with nothing but the duty calls of the prison officials to vary the horrible monotony; my mind a prey to such torture as any man must feel, who separated from those whom he loves, with no knowledge of what is happening to them, knows only too well that their comfort, their happiness, their very lives are dependent on him. All this, combined with the prospect of nine weary months of such misery before me, has brought about a state of mental depression against which I have been unable to successfully battle. So that although during the last two weeks, thanks to the kindly considerateness of his lordship and the indulgence of the governor of the prison, I have been supplied with the means for preparing to meet this charge, I have found myself unequal to the task. I therefore, gentlemen, crave your indulgence for any deficiencies in my defence, and ask you to believe that the great principle of "Free speech and Freethought," assailed here to-day, is capable of being sustained by the best of arguments and the grandest of oratory. I stand before you charged with blasphemy—an offence which is not of the nature of a crime like theft or murder, but is a manufactured offence, differing in various countries (blasphemy in Spain is orthodoxy in England, blasphemy in India is orthodoxy in England), made for the purpose of maintaining the doctrines of the Established Church and suppressing all opinions which differed from them. During the time that the Church had supreme control over the making and administering of the laws of the country, prosecutions were plentiful. Quakers were branded and flogged as blasphemers, Unitarians were punished as blasphemers, and are even now indictable under this same law under which I am prosecuted. Deistical writings were

prosecuted as blasphemous and the publishers sent to prison. But gradually as dissent grew more powerful, as opinions more in accordance with freedom and justice permeated the minds of the people, as religious tests and disabilities were abolished, and men, for the suppression of whose opinions these laws were made, began to take part in the legislation of the country, so these infamous prosecutions grew less and less in number, the law falling at last into such disuse, that for more than fifty years no prosecution of this character has been instituted in the City of London, although hundreds of attacks upon Christianity have been made during that time, some of a far more severe character than those for which men were sent to prison, mostly published within the city precincts and all liable to prosecution under this law, by any public company manipulator who, finding his financial reputation growing shady, thinks he may obtain a cheap reputation for piety by posing before a gullible public as a modern defender of the faith, and gain a substantial profit at the same time. Into such disuse have these laws fallen that the highest and most honored expositors of English law are at utter variance as to what should be their modern interpretation. One view is that Christianity being by law established, any publication which denies its truth must be blasphemous. Mr. Justice Stephens lays it down that the blasphemy lies in the *matter* not in the *manner*. If this be so, then the major portion of the best works of the leading scientists of the day should have been indicted as blasphemous. If your verdict should be in accordance with this view, then this prosecution will be the precursor of a general raid. This is not a mere idle assertion, for emboldened by the initiation of these prosecutions a society is already in existence with the Rev. "Dr." Wainwright at its head, which has announced in the "Times" its intention of prosecuting the works of Messrs. Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and others as rapidly as its funds will allow. This may appear ridiculous, but the ridiculousness is the fault of the law, not the men. They are logical enough, and certainly far more honest than the instigators of this prosecution. Another view is, that controversy on any subject should be permitted which is carried on in decorous language and in good faith; but that ridicule, abuse, contumelious reproach, or the use of language calculated to wound the feelings of Christians, should be held to be blasphemous. This has the merit of plausibility, but I trust I shall succeed in proving to you that it has nothing more. Before accepting this view, you must believe that these laws were made for the purpose of protecting the feelings of members of the Established Church, while the feelings of all else might be outraged

with impunity. The test for blasphemy would be whether some one's feelings had been hurt, and then, as Lord Shaftesbury has denounced the proceedings of the Salvation Army as outrageous and blasphemous, it would be the duty of the authorities to consign General Booth and his companions to prison. But to satisfy even the most rudimentary notions of justice, the law should at any rate be reciprocal, and each should be compelled to refrain from hurting the feelings of every other, whether he be Churchman, Dissenter, Jew, Mahomedan, Freethinker, or anything else. It could not even stop at that. There are a great number of people who are far more sentitive on political questions than on theological ones, I believe that many times more people had their feelings outraged by the cartoon which appeared in a so-called comic paper a few weeks since, representing Mr. Gladstone as the notorious and infamous "No. 1," than have ever experienced the slightest annoyance at anything appearing in the "Freethinker." So that to be just, the law should protect the feelings of every political partisan. The same argument will hold good in science and literature. In short, it would be a criminal law for the enforcement of politeness all round; and that no law could possibly accomplish, even it were desirable to attempt it by such means. Starkie, held to be an authority for this view, says: "A *wilful* intention to pervert, insult and mislead others by means of licentious and contumelious abuse applied to sacred subjects, or by wilful misrepresentations, or by artful sophistry, calculated to mislead the ignorant or unwary, is the criterion and test of guilt." Now, gentlemen, we are not charged with using licentious language; there is not the faintest trace of it; the prosecution would have been glad to seize on it if there had been. Do not be misled by the prurient hints of the learned counsel suggestive of obscenity and indecency, which are used for the sole purpose of insinuating a charge he dared not openly make. Which would you consider to be "artful sophistry calculated to mislead the ignorant or unwary?" the mere banter, and ephemeral jests never intended and never supposed to be serious, appearing in a little obscure periodical, here to day and gone to morrow; or the works I have alluded to, not ephemeral, but taking their place as standard literature, not intended and not thought to be jest, but the serious reasonings of thoughtful men with all the authority of world-wide reputation. Artful sophistry can only mean that which has the appearance of wise reasoning, and is not; and I submit, gentlemen, that there can be no doubt as to which class of publication that epithet most fitly applies to in the mind of a firm believer. Most certainly these works have done ten

thousand times more to undermine and destroy the Christian faith than the "Freethinker" could do in a century. These laws really owe their retention to their disuse. Whilst all liberal-minded men who knew of their existence were ashamed of them, nobody thought them worth troubling about, believing them to be dead. They would have been abolished long since had the prosecution been honest in its bigotry instead of hypocritical, and had it attacked wealthy firms which have issued high-priced blasphemy for the cultured classes. If these laws were not in existence, not even the most bigoted man in the House of Commons would think of attempting to make them, or, if he did, could carry his project one solitary stage. This was abundantly proved, when not long since, Lord Redesdale sought to bring in a bill in the House of Lords, imposing a religious test on Members of Parliament. The bill was contemptuously thrown out. But now the so-long dormant monster of Religious Persecution is to be galvanised into new life and prosecutions are in full swing, not against wealthy firms, who may publish as much blasphemy as they like in costly volumes—that would be too dangerous; but against men who, because they are poor, are easier to attack. The courage of the prosecution is that of a big bully who valiantly assails a small boy. And what is the pretext? that the limits of controversy have been overstepped. But what are the limits of controversy? Every doctrine in the Bible, every article of the Church of England, almost every verse from Genesis to Revelation has been the subject of controversy, not alone between Christians and Freethinkers but between the thousand and one sects into which Christianity itself is split in every direction. The learned counsel has not attempted to define those limits, nor to say when or by whom they were made. The words might have some meaning if we had in England an Inquisition which from time to time issued an edict and said "in criticism thus far shalt thou go and no farther;" but until we have such a tribunal the words are meaningless. It is merely the cant phrase which has always been used when bigotry has sought to crush hostile opinion, and each counsel, half ashamed of the task he has in hand, borrows it from his predecessor. Since these old laws fell into disuse a great change has come about in religious controversy. Education has advanced with great and rapid strides, and heresy has kept pace with it, so that opinions are freely expressed to-day which less than a century ago would have sent their author to prison. The Rev. W. Woolston was sent to prison for a long time for denying the truth of the Pentateuch. To-day Colenso does the same thing and remains and receives the salary of a bishop of the Established

Church; and he employs the same weapon of attack, namely, ridicule, as we are charged with using. He over and over again shows the falsity of the stories in the Pentateuch by reducing them to an absurdity; as, for instance, wherehe calculates that, according to the biblical account, every mother in Israel must have had forty-two sons besides a proportionate number of daughters. His works have been before the public for twenty years, and yet no one dreams of prosecuting Messrs. Longmans, the publishers of them. Peter Annett denied the authenticity of the Pentateuch, and was sent to prison for more than a year, and twice stood in the pillory. Dr. Temple does the same thing in the famous "Essays and Reviews," and is rewarded by being made Bishop of Exeter; and, although Lord Shaftesbury denounced the work as "blasphemous productions vomited forth from hell," yet no one has prosecuted or thinks of prosecuting the publisher. When Willams was prosecuted for selling Paine's "Age of Reason," Lord Chief Justice Kenyon said, in passing sentence, that if such works were permitted to be sold the law would be stripped of one of its principle sanctions—the dread of future punishment. Canon Farrar may to-day publish his disbelief in a hell, and, instead of being placed in a criminal dock, he is made a high dignitary of the Church of England. In nearly the last indictment for blasphemy, Messrs. Moxon were found guilty of blasphemy for publishing Shelley's "Queen Mab," under a similar indictment to that on which I stand arraigned. To-day we find that no less a person than the late First Lord of the Admiralty publishes that same Shelley's "Queen Mab," upon every railway-bookstall in the Kingdom without let or hindrance, and in absolute defiance of the verdict of the jury which condemned it; and when he was appointed to that high office in the State, not one member of the House of Commons rose to protest or say a word about it—not even the learned counsel for the prosecution, who sat in the House as a member. He not only said nothing about it, but actually accepted the office of Solicitor-General, thus becoming legal adviser to one who was deliberately setting the Blasphemy Laws and a jury's verdict at defiance. What conclusion can you come to, gentlemen, other than that the learned counsel and the whole of the House of Commons considered these laws to be obsolete and the jury's verdict worthless? What value, gentlemen, will you put on the new-found zeal for enforcing these laws on the part of one who was quite content to condone blasphemy when the blasphemer could confer place, power, and emolument? The exact value may be found in figures at the back of his brief. Surely, gentlemen, when we find so great a change has taken place,

that men may now say with impunity, and with honor, that which, when those laws were in operation, would have sent them to prison; when we find that that which less than a century ago would have ensured the author a long confinement in gaol, is now rewarded with a bishopric; when we find that a bishop may say (and still retain his office) that for which a man was sent to prison and the pillory; when we find the Quaker, whipped and branded in one age, lately sitting in the Cabinet itself; when we find a Cabinet Minister himself setting at defiance the verdict of a comparatively modern jury, and deliberately publishing the blasphemy they condemned without protest or hindrance on the part of the authorities so defied; surely, gentlemen, it is not too much to ask you to believe that the promoters of this paper were not actuated by any desire to commit a breach of the peace, but were fully persuaded that, in view of the many and great changes that had taken place—to some of which I have drawn your attention; with the knowledge that the law had been regarded as obsolete for many years—no one would think of dragging from its obscurity this barbaric relic of the legislation of a bad bygone time and setting it in force against them. No good was ever done by these prosecutions, even from the point of view of the prosecutors themselves; they do but draw attention to that which was sought to be suppressed. No work was ever yet suppressed by prosecution. Paine's "Age of Reason" and "Rights of Man" have been prosecuted over and over again, and to-day their sale is greater than ever. Of those who are prosecuted it makes martyrs, for these laws have never been directed against real criminals but always against honest citizens. I stand before you to-day charged with a criminal offence, and yet am a man whose character is unspotted, whose honor is unimpeached, whose integrity is unquestioned; and whatever bodily torture and mental agony an adverse verdict might inflict—it might kill me, but it could not sully my reputation nor blacken my name. I ask of you, gentlemen, a deliverance from this cruel and hateful law; I ask you to say by a verdict of Not Guilty that you refuse to define blasphemy anew; and stamp with your disapproval these disgraceful attempts to revive the fossil remains of laws which, passed in an ignorant, barbarous, and brutal time, are an anachronism out of all harmony with the growing freedom of the age. I ask you to refuse to reopen that page of English history of which we should all feel ashamed, stained as it is with the blood and tears of thousands of victims to priestly intolerance and persecution; that page which all right-thinking men would gladly see blotted out for ever. As Professor Hunter truly says: "The Heresy Laws bring

before us one of the most melancholy aberrations of legislation. These laws have caused prodigious suffering, but they never conferred on the human race one iota of countervailing advantage. They represent a dead loss to the credit side of human happiness, and the passions which gave rise to them. are an unmitigated and unredeemed evil. Black is the guilt of those who have abused their position as the guides and instructors of mankind, to plant in the infant mind the seeds of unfounded and irrational hatred, and so have helped to pile up that great mountain of persecution of man's inhumanity to man, which has made countless thousands mourn."

Mr. Foote next addressed the jury. He said: "My lord and gentlemen of the jury, I am very happy, not to stand in this position, but to learn what I had not learned before—how a criminal trial should be conducted, notwithstanding that two months ago I was tried in another court, and before another judge. Fortunately, the learned counsel who are conducting this prosecution have not now a judge who will allow them to walk out of court whilst he argues their brief for them in their absence.

Lord Coleridge: You must learn one more lesson, Mr. Foote, and that is, that one judge cannot hear another judge censured or even commended.

Mr. Foote: My lord, I thank you for the correction, and I will simply, therefore, confine what observations I might have made on that head to the emphatic statement that I have learnt to-day, for the first time—although this is the second time I have had to answer a criminal charge—how a criminal trial should be conducted. And, notwithstanding the terrible nature of my position, there is some consolation in being able, for the first time in two months, to talk to twelve honest men. Two months ago I fell amongst thieves, and have had to remain in their society ever since, so long as I have been in any society at all. It is not my intention, it is not even my wish, to go over the ground which was traversed by my co-defendant in his very eloquent and pathetic account, his manly and simple account of the mental difficulties which accompanied the preparation of his defence; but I will add, that although we have profited—I may say in especial by the facilities which his lordship so kindly ordered for us, and by the kind consideration of the governor of Holloway Goal—yet it has been altogether impossible, in the midst of such depressing circumstances, for a man to do any justice to such a case as I have to maintain. Prison diet, gentlemen, to begin with—a material item—is not of the most invigorating character. (Laughter.) My blood is to some extent impoverished, my faculties are to a large extent weakened, and it is only with considerable difficulty

that I shall be able to make them obey the mandate of my will. The mental circumstances, how depressing have they been! In looking over a law book I saw something about solitary confinement as only being allowable for one month at a time, and for not more than three months in one year. What the nature of the confinement is I am unable to ascertain, but it strikes me that twenty-three hours' confinement out of twenty-four, in a small cell about six feet wide, comes as close as possible to any reasonable definition of solitary confinement. Still it is no use wearying you with the difficulties that have attended the preparation of my defence. This much, however, must be said in connexion with it; that a change has come over the method of treating those who are found guilty and sentenced to punishment under these laws. Gentleman, as a matter of fact, an indisputable matter of fact, I and my co-defendants are undergoing essentially the severest punishment that has been inflicted for any blasphemous libel for the last 120 years. Since Peter Annett's confinement in Clerkenwell Gaol with twelve months' hard labor, in the year 1763, there has been no punishment meted out to a Freethought publisher or writer at all approximating to what we have to undergo. The sentence, even before the law practically fell into disuse from forty to fifty years ago, gradually dwindled to six, four, and three months. Our sentence, gentlemen, was twelve months. Again, prisoners were nearly all treated as first-class misdemeanants—as far as I can ascertain, all were—they were not sentenced to twelve months—not merely of intellectual death—but twelve months of *conscious* intellectual death. They were not debarred from access to their friends, and most of them even carried on their literary work, and supported those near and dear to them. We have to depend on the charity of those who, notwithstanding the position in which we stood two months ago, and stand now, do not esteem us the less—who understand that there is a great vital principle struck at through us, however unworthy we may be to defend it, and who in lending their aid to see that our interests do not suffer so much as they otherwise would, are actuated by more than friendship for us, by their love of that principle which has been assailed by our conviction, sentence, and committal to gaol, and is again assailed in the prosecution which is being conducted here to-day. A change, gentlemen, has come over the public mind with respect to heresy and blasphemy, which every reader of history finds intelligible. Religious bigotry is never more vicious than when it has a large infusion of hypocrisy. While people feel that their cause can be defended by argument they are ready to defend it by those means. While they feel that supernatural power is maintaining their creed they are to a large extent content in trusting their

cause to the deity in whom they believe. But when they feel that the ground, intellectually and morally, is slipping away under their feet; when they feel that the major portion of the intellectual power of their day and generation is arrayed against their creed, when it is not scornful or indifferent to it; when, in short, the creed is not only losing its members' brains, but its own wits; then it turns in wrath, not upon the high-class heretics who are striking week after week the most deadly blows at the creed in which these prosecutors profess to believe, but at those who happen to be poor and comparatively obscure. These poorer and more pronounced Freethinkers, are made the scapegoats for the more respectable Agnosticism of the day, which is more cultured, but infinitely more hypocritical. The martyrdom of olden times had something of the heroic in it. A man was led out to death. He could summon courage for the minutes or hours during which he still had to face his enemies. They placed faggots round his funeral pyre. In a few minutes, at the outside, life ended; and a man might nerve himself to meet the worst under such circumstances. Then also the persecutors had the courage of the principles on which they proceeded, and said, "We do this to the heretic in the name of god; we do it because he has outraged the dignity of god, and because he has preached ideas that are leading others to eternal destruction with him." But now orthodoxy has a large infusion of hypocrisy; like Pilate, it washes its hands. But, gentlemen, all its pretences will be discounted, I believe, by you. When it is said, "We don't do this in the interests of outraged omnipotence, and we, the finite, are not arrogantly championing the power, or even the dignity of omnipotence;" when they say "We are only carrying out a measure of social sanitation, and preventing men from making indecent outrages on the feelings of others;" you will agree with me in believing that this is hypocrisy and cowardice also. Looked at clearly, it is utterly impossible that you can draw any line of demarcation between the manner of controversy in religion and that in politics, or any other department of intellectual activity, unless you make a difference as to the matter, unless you go the full length of the principle which is implied, and logically say: "We do so because religion is not as these. There is matter as well as manner, and we protect the feelings of men with respect to these subjects, because there is invulnerable truth somewhere imbedded in their belief, and we will not allow it to be wantonly assailed."

I will now dismiss that, and will ask your attention, before I proceed to deal with matters of more importance, and certainly more dignity, to some remarks that fell from the lips of the junior counsel for the prosecution, in what

he called the temporary absence of his leader—a temporary absence which has turned out to be considerably protracted. One remark he made use of was that we had attempted to make a wicked and nefarious profit out of the trade in these alleged blasphemous libels. That seemed to me to be very superfluous, because if, as he held, the libels were wicked and nefarious, there was no need to say anything about the nature of the profit. But he himself ought to know—at any rate his leader would have known—that a passage was read at our previous trial, and nsed as evidence against me in particular—a passage which distinctly stated that notwithstanding the large sale—and a large sale is always a comparative term, for what may be a large sale for the "Freethinker" would not be large for the "Times"—the proprietor was many pounds out of pocket. The learned counsel for the prosecution, I daresay, knew that, but then it suited his denunciatory style to talk about wicked and nefarious profit. (Laughter.) I have no doubt he makes profit out of the prosecution—it is his business. You can get any quantity of that sort of thing by ordering it, provided you at the same time give some guarantee that after ordering, it will be paid for. He spoke of a blustering challenge which was thrown out in one of the alleged libels, and he gave you a quotation from it in which the word "blasphemy" was used. The report said that a man at Tunbridge Wells was being prosecuted for blasphemy. The learned counsel omitted to tell you what you will find by referring to the indictment, that the word "blasphemy" is between inverted commas, which shows it was employed there, not in the sense of the writer, but as a vague word, to which he might not attach the same meaning as those using it. So much for that.

And now one word more as to his introduction before I proceed. The word "licentiousness" was introduced. The word "decency" was introduced. I have to complain of all this. I propose to follow the method which was followed in Mr. Bradlaugh's trial some days ago in this court, and had the full approval of his lordship. I don't propose to do what the junior counsel for the prosecution did, notwithstanding he said he would not, and read to you any passages from those alleged libels. Although I do that, I feel what an immense disadvantage results to me because the words "indecency," "licentiousness," are bandied about outside before the great jury of public opinion, and we are accused. and may be pronounced guilty and sentenced for offences which people outside have never had properly explained to them. Thus we are brought in guilty of blasphemy, and people say we should have been so sentenced and punished because our attack was indecent. Now, the word "indecency" as you know, has a twofold meaning. It may mean un-

becoming or obscene. People will take which meaning best suits their purpose, and so we are at this great disadvantage when none of these libels are read out, that we may be brought in guilty of a charge and sent to prison on it, and people outside may think that we are really guilty of another offence and actually punished for that, the other being a cloak and pretence. I leave the junior counsel for the prosecution.

My co-defendant has referred to the impolicy of these prosecutions. I wish to say a word or two on that head. They have one great disadvantage from the point of view of the prosecution —they advertise and disseminate widely the very opinions which they try to suppress; and it seems to me if they were really honest and had the interests of their own professed principles at heart, they would shrink from taking any such steps. Then again, history shows us that no work that was ever prosecuted was successfully put down. There was only one method of persecution that succeeded, and that was persecution to the extent of extermination. If you take the case of the massacre of the Albigenses, or take the case of early Christian heresies—the very names of which read as the names of some old fossil things that belonged to a different era of the world's history—you will find wherever a sect has been crushed out it has been by extermination —that is, by putting to death everybody suspected of holding the objectionable opinion; but when books and pamphlets have been prosecuted they have never been put down. Unless you can seize and secure everybody infected with heresy, naturally you arouse their indignation and excite their fervor—you make those who were before critics afterwards fanatics, and consequently they fight all the harder for the cause attacked. Paine's "Age of Reason" was a prosecuted work. Richard Carlile was sent to gaol for nine years for selling it; his wife and sister were sent to gaol; shopman after shopman went to gaol. You would have thought that would have suppressed the "Age of Reason;" yet, as a matter of fact, that work still has a large circulation, and a sale all the larger because of the prosecutions instituted against it fifty or sixty years ago. Take the case of a prosecuted work belonging to another class of literature—a pamphlet published by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, the prosecution of which was denounced by the then Lord Chief Justice from the Bench. By that prosecution, a work that had been circulated at the rate of one hundred per year for forty years, was run up to a sale of one hundred and seventy-five thousand. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that in that case the prosecutors had defeated their own object. When a question as to the "Freethinker" was asked in the House of Commons, so far back as February in last year, Sir William Harcourt replied that it was the opinion of all persons who

had to do with these matters, that it was not politic to proceed legally against such a publication. That answer was made to Mr. Freshfield. A few days afterwards he made a similar answer to Mr. Redmond. But there is a class of people who rush in "where angels fear to tread," and the prosecution has unfortunately done that. It is a curious thing, gentlemen, that all those who have been moving against the persons who are alleged to be responsible for the "Freethinker," belong to one political party. The junior counsel for the prosecution told you that no doubt one of the two defendants would ask you to believe this was a political move, and I do ask you to believe it is almost entirely a political move. Every person connected with it has been a Tory. Mr. Freshfield represents the immaculate borough of Dover, and Mr. Redmond is the representative of a small Irish constituency, the whole of whose voters could be conveyed to Westminster in a very few omnibuses. (Laughter.) Next, gentlemen, comes the Corporation of the City of London that secured a verdict against myself and my co-defendant two months ago. I need not tell you what the politics of the Corporation of the City of London are, nor will I undertake to prophesy what they will be when brought into something like acccord with the spirit of the age by the new Bill which is to be introduced. The prosecuting counsel, Sir Hardinge Giffard, is also a Tory. I don't mean to say that he is the worse for that. Every man has a right to belong to which political party he pleases. Tory, Whig, Conservative and Liberal, are great historic names, and men of genius and high character may be found on both sides. But it is a curious thing that this prosecution should be conducted so entirely by men of one political persuasion, while those struck at belong to the extreme opposite political persuasion. These two things should operate in your minds, and influence your views as to the motives which animate those who conceived this persecution, and find the funds to carry it out. And last, though not least, we have Sir Henry Tyler, also a Tory of the deepest dye, who has been the pronounced and bitter public enemy of Mr. Bradlaugh, one of my co-defendants who is released from his position of danger by a verdict of acquittal. At my previous trial the jury were told that the real prosecutor was not the City Corporation but our lady the Queen. I am very glad indeed to be able to rely on the authority of his lordship in saying that the nominal prosecutor in this case is the Queen, and the actual prosecutor who sets the Crown in motion is Sir Henry Tyler. Now, gentlemen, what was the real reason for Sir Henry Tyler's moving in this case at all? Sir Henry Tyler was known to be engaged in the City in financial pursuits. He was known to be a dexterous financier and an experienced director of public companies. He was known to be not so much

loved by shareholders as by political friends, and you would think if outraged deity wanted a champion, Sir Henry Tyler would be one of the last persons who would receive an application. (Laughter.) Sir Henry Tyler had an enemy in Mr. Bradlaugh. Sir Henry Tyler had been rebuked in the House of Commons, by a minister of the Crown, for his mad antagonism to Mr. Bradlaugh. It is he who has found all the funds for this prosecution, and I ask you to believe that this prosecution was initiated and carried on by Sir Henry Tyler and his political friends for a purely political purpose; to cripple, if possible, Mr. Bradlaugh, and so to win through religious prejudice what could not be won by open political warfare. As I said before, men of genius and high character are to be found in the two great political camps, but this is a miserable descent for a great historic party, which once had its Peels and its Pitts, and now has its Churchills, its Newdegates, its Tylers and its Giffards. (Laughter.)

Our offence is blasphemy. The word "blasphemy" has a theological meaning as well as a moral and legal one; and directly you put the question theologically, What is blasphemy? you are stunned by a babel of contradictory answers. In our own country the Christian says Jesus Christ is god, and it is blasphemy to say he is not. A Jew, also a citizen, and who may sit in our national legislature, says Jesus Christ was not god, and it is blasphemy to say he was. In short, one might say theologically, that blasphemy is entirely a question of geography; the answer to the question will depend upon the country you are in and the time you put the question. It is a matter of longitude and latitude, and if we are to rely upon the very loose view of the law I shall have to refer to, as given by Starkie, it is a matter of very considerable latitude. The Bible, which it is alleged we have assailed, does not help us very much. The blasphemy referred to in the Old Testament is simply that of cursing god, which I suppose no one would do, if even he had a monitress like Job's wife, except his proper position was not in Holloway Gaol but in Colney Hatch. (Laughter.) The Jewish law is very unfortunate, and it is unfortunate to refer to, because it culminated in the judicial murder of Jesus Christ. And you have the spirit of the blasphemy law brought out in the prosecution of Jesus of Nazareth, and, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, the proceedings for blasphemy against St. Paul. With the Jews a man was soon found guilty, and very often after they had stoned him to death they settled at leisure the question whether he was really guilty or not. It was Pontius Pilate, who represented the majesty of the law, that stood between the bigotry of the Jews and their victim. And you will remember that it was the Roman power, the secular power, which cared for none

of these things, that St. Paul appealed to and that saved his life from his Jewish enemies, who would have put him to death as a blasphemer. Morally, blasphemy can only be committed by a person who believes in the existence of the deity whom he blasphemes. Lord Brougham has left that on record in his "Life of Voltaire." He says that ridicule or abuse of deities in whom he doesn't believe is only ridicule and abuse of ideas which have no meaning to him, and he cannot be guilty of blasphemy unless he believes in the being whom he blasphemes. In practice, blasphemy means, always did and always will, a strong attack upon what we happen to believe. The early Christian used to blaspheme before he gained a victory over Paganism, and he was put to death. The Protestant used to blaspheme before he triumphed in England over the Catholic. The Dissenter blasphemed before he won political rights as against a domineering State Church, and he was put to death. The Unitarians blasphemed and they were imprisoned; but when they became a powerful section of the community they were tolerated, and more extreme Freethinkers became blasphemers. It is particularly necessary you should bear this in mind, because you must consider the very unfair position in which a man stands who is brought before a tribunal believing in the existence of the deity and the attributes of the deity, who is said to be blasphemed in a publication for which it is maintained he is responsible; and when at the same time they have to adjudicate, not only upon the matter of it, but the manner of it. If they dislike the matter they are sure to object to the manner; and so a man in my position stands at a dreadful disadvantage. Blasphemy means a strong attack upon our belief, whatever it happens to be—that is, our religious belief; and, curiously enough, I have noticed many publications which urged that the blasphemy laws should be amended, and it should be made a crime to insult any form of religious belief. I should not oppose any such amendment as that, because it would very soon reduce the whole thing to an absurdity; for every sect would be prosecuting every other sect; courts of justice would be filled with disputes, and the whole blasphemy law would have to be abolished, and every form of opinion would be equal in the eye of the law, as I hold it should be.

Our indictment is at common law. The great danger of this is, there is no statute to be appealed to accurately defining the crime. Blasphemy is not like theft or murder —it is more a matter of opinion and taste. And it really comes to this—that no man can know thoroughly what a blasphemous libel is; and no man can be sure whether he is penning a blasphemous libel or not; and the only way to find out what the offence is, is to go to Holloway Gaol for twelve

months, which is a very unpleasant way of deciding a matter of this kind. It means that a jury is summoned, and the matter is put into their hands; and if they don't like it, that is sufficient for a verdict of Guilty. It is a very unfortunate thing that any man should be tried for such an offence at common law. Recently, when I was tried at the Old Bailey, Mr. Justice North, in his summing-up, told the jury that any denial of the existence of deity was blasphemy. On the first occasion the jury would not bring in a verdict of Guilty, and had to be discharged; and I was kept in prison until the next trial took place. Mr. Justice North told the jury on the second trial nothing of the sort. He left out altogether the words as to denying the existence of deity. What made the change in three days? It is impossible for me to say. It may be he thought a conviction easier with such an interpretation of the law; or it may be that even he, a judge, had read the comments in the daily press, and that some alteration had been made, perhaps for the better. The view which was entertained by Mr. Justice North does not seem to be the view entertained by the Lord Chief Justice, in whose presence, fortunately, I now stand, if I may judge by his summing up on the trial of one of my co-defendants in this action last week. Then, again, we have Mr. Justice Stephen, who is practically at variance, not only with Mr. Justice North, but with the still higher authority of his lordship; so that it would largely depend, in being tried at common law, whether one happened to have one's trial presided over by this judge or the other. In the particular case I cited one jury brought in a verdict of Guilty, but another jury four days before—although the evidence was exactly the same—declined to. So that you have a double uncertainty—your fate depends upon the view of the law entertained by the judge who presides at the trial, and on the tastes and the convictions of the jury. I submit, gentlemen, that is a very grave defect, and puts at great disadvantage men who stand in my position. If a man is to be sent to gaol for twelve months, blasphemous libel should be defined by statute. The 9th and 10th William III. is the only statute dealing with blasphemy. It was held in the Court of Queen's Bench when Mr. Bradlaugh moved to quash the indictment, on which I am now being tried, that this statute was aimed at specific offenders, and only laid down so much law as referred to them. No doubt that is true enough; but still, if the statute does not fully define blasphemy, yet everything included within the statute is clearly blasphemy. There is not a word about ridicule, abuse, or contumely. The statute says anybody who has professed the Christian religion within these realms, shall, for denying the existence of god, or saying there are more gods than one, or denying the truth of Christianity, be sub-

ject to certain penalties. The law was called "ferocious" by Mr. Justice Stephen himself, and it admirably enlightens us as to the nature of the age in which those Blasphemy Laws originated. So that even the statute appears to contain a view of the law, which the Lord Chief Justice so considerately said he should not feel justified in being a party to, unless it were clearer than it seemed to him.

Having said we were tried at common law, and dwelt on its disadvantages, I ask what is common law? Common law is judge-made law and jury-made law. Mr. Justice Stephen on this point has some very notable remarks in the introduction to his "Digest of the Criminal Law":—"It is not until a very late stage in its history that law is regarded as a series of commands issued by the sovereign power of the State. Indeed, even in our own time and country that conception of it is gaining ground very slowly. An earlier and, to some extent, a still prevailing view of it is, that it is more like an art or science, the principles of which are first enunciated vaguely, and are gradually reduced to precision by their application to particular circumstances. Somehow, no one can say precisely how, though more or less plausible and instructive conjectures upon the subject may be made, certain principles came to be accepted as the law of the land. The judges held themselves bound to decide the cases which came before them according to those principles, and as new combinations of circumstances threw light on the way in which they operated, the principles were, in some cases, more fully developed and qualified, and in others evaded or practically set at nought and repealed." That is precisely what I ask you to do in this case. I ask you to consider that this common law is merely old common usage, altogether alien to the spirit of our age; and that it cannot be enforced without making invidious, unfair, and infamous distinctions between one form of heresy and another; and I ask you to say that it shall not be enforced at all if you have any power to prevent it.

Why should you, as a special jury in this High Court of Justice, not set a new precedent? I propose briefly to give a few reasons why you should. Blasphemy, my co-defendant told you, was a manufactured crime. I urge that it is altogether alien to the spirit of our age. The junior counsel for the prosecution said blasphemy was prosecuted very seldom; it had not been prosecuted in the City for fifty years; and he urged as a reason that blasphemy was not often committed. "For fifty years!" That is not true. From my slight knowledge of literature, which is not, as one of the journals said, entirely confined to Tom Paine and the writings of Mr. Bradlaugh, I could undertake to furnish the junior counsel for the prosecu-

tion with some tons of blasphemy published during that fifty years; although I probably could not find the prosecution such a powerful motive as they have recently had for proceeding against these blasphemous libels. The law against blasphemy is practically obsolete—the fact that there have been no such prosecutions for fifty years ought to settle that point. Mr. Justice Stephen himself, as to chapter 17 of his "Digest," which includes the whole of the offences against religion, says: "The whole of this law is practically obsolete, and might be repealed with advantage;" and he further said it would be sufficient as to blasphemy if the power of prosecution were confined to the Attorney-General. In this case the Attorney-General has had nothing to do with the prosecution. The jury were told in another court the Public Prosecutor had instituted it. As a matter of fact, he simply allowed it. The Public Prosecutor has undergone himself a good deal of ridicule, and I submit that his allowance or disallowance is scarcely equivalent to the allowance or disallowance of the Attorney-General, and certainly not equivalent to the institution of proceedings by the Attorney-General. Mr. Justice Stephen says: "My own opinion is that blasphemy, except cursing and swearing, ought not to be made the subject of temporal punishment at all, though, if it tended to produce a breach of the peace, it might be dealt with on those grounds." I shall have a few words to say about breach of the peace shortly. Thus Mr. Justice Stephens says: "This law is practically obsolete," and further that no temporal punishment should be inflicted for it. You are made the entire judges of this question, under the very clear language of the celebrated Libel Act, called "Fox's Act," passed in 1792, to regulate libel trials. When issue was joined between the Crown and one or more defendants, it was there laid down that the jury were not bound to bring in a verdict of guilty merely on the proof of the publication by such defendants of a paper, and of the sense ascribed to the same in the indictment. So that I hold you are the complete judges; there is no power on earth that can go behind your judgment. You are not bound to give a reason for your verdict; you are simply called upon to say guilty or not guilty; and I submit you have a perfect right to say guilty or not—especially not guilty—on the broad issue of the question; and thus to declare that this blasphemy law is utterly alien to the spirit of our age.

It would be impossible for the old common law to be enforced now. The old common law was never put in force against persons who only ridiculed the Christian religion. Our indictment charges us with bringing the Christian religion into disbelief; so that bringing it into disbelief is blasphemy. That is logical—bringing it into disbelief is bringing it into gross con-

tempt. All the cases, from Nayler down to the latest cases of forty years ago, and as far down as the year 1867, turn upon the right of a man to question and oppose publicly the truth of the Christian religion. Peter Annett stated in the "Free Inquirer" his disbelief in the inspiration of the Pentateuch, and was punished for it; Bishop Colenso can prove the same thing in seven big volumes, and not only remain a colonial Bishop of the English Church, but men of culture, like Mr. Matthew Arnold rebuke him for disproving what no sensible person believes. In the case of Woolston, he languished in Newgate year after year, and I believe he died there. For what? For saying that the miracles of the New Testament should not be taken literally, but allegorically. Mr. Matthew Arnold says that the Bible miracles are fairy tales, and are all doomed, and that educated and intelligent men treat them as portions of the world's superstition. Nobody now thinks of prosecuting Mr. Matthew Arnold, yet he is guilty of the same offence as Woolston. Bishop Colenso is guilty of the same offence as Peter Annett, and yet no one thinks now-a-days of punishing him. If, gentlemen, the common law is more humane now, it is only because the spirit of the age is more humane. That you are bound to take into consideration, and that should influence you in giving a verdict of not guilty to me and to my co-defendant.

I may refer you to a case which occurred in the year 1867, which will show you that the common law has always held that it is a crime to call in question the truth of the Christian religion. In the year 1867 the case of Cowan *v.* Milbourn was decided in the Court of Exchequer; it originally arose in Liverpool. The secretary of the Liverpool Secular Society had engaged the assembly room for the purpose of two lectures. The lectures were entitled, "The character and teaching of Christ; the former defective, the latter misleading;" and the second, "The Bible shown to be no more inspired than any other book." There is not a word of ridicule, sarcasm or contumely in this language; yet when the owner of the rooms, after the expense of advertising had been incurred, refused the use of them for the lectures, and declined to compensate the persons who had rented for those two nights, it was held by the Court of Exchequer that it was an illegal act to deliver such lectures with such titles, and that no damages could be recovered, because the rooms had been declined for the perpetration of an illegal act. Acting on this case, some solicitors at Southampton last summer, after the expenses of advertising had been incurred, refused the use of the Victoria Assembly Room for a lecture by myself, on the ground that the lecture would be an illegal act. The lady who owned the room was pious, although

she had not the honesty to recompense my friends for damages they had incurred on the strength of her own agent's written contract. As far back then as 1867, it was held that any impugning of the truth of Christianity was an illegal act, and my contention, therefore, holds good that bringing Christianity into disbelief is as much a part of blasphemy as bringing it into contempt.

I know there are objections urged against this view. It is said that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England. We have had, fortunately, a trenchant criticism of this by his lordship. It was pointed out by his lordship, in language so precise that I am sorry I cannot quote it, that if Christianity was part and parcel of the law of the land, in the sense in which the words are generally used, then it would be impossible to bring about any reform of law, because, no law could be criticised, much less ridiculed, on the same ground that Christianity, which is part of the law, cannot be ridiculed or criticised. Something occurred to me which seems to go even further than that; and that is, that if Christianity were part and parcel of the law of the land, then the prosecution for blasphemy would be an absurdity. There is no crime in criticising any law, or ridiculing any law, in the pages of "Punch." If Christianity were part and parcel of the law of the land, there could be no crime in criticising it. That view was taken by the Royal Commissioners in 1841. In their report they went into it at great length. The Royal Commission did endorse that view, and pointed out fully that if Christianity were part of the law of the land, still the law could be criticised and ridiculed, and, therefore, no blasphemy indictment could lie on any such grounds. Sir Matthew Hale, a judge of the 17th century, first said that Christianity was part and parcel of the law of the country. He was a man of great intellectual ability, and a most upright judge; but if he lived in our age, would he endorse such ridiculous language now? He was infected by the superstition of his age. This same judge sentenced two women to be hung for witchcraft, an offence which we now know never could exist, notwithstanding the verse in Exodus, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The time will come when it will be thought quite as absurd to prosecute people for the crime of blasphemy as we think it now to hang people for witchcraft. If blasphemy be a crime at all, it is only a crime against god, who, if he be omniscient, knows it all, and who, if omnipotent, is quite capable of punishing it all.

Since Sir Matthew Hale's time there have been great alterations in the state and in society, alterations which will justify you in setting this old barbarous law aside. To begin with, compulsory oaths have been abolished in our courts of justice

Evidence can now be given by Freethinkers on affirmation. Mr. Bradlaugh last week was acquitted on the evidence of people, every one of whom affirmed, and not one of whom took the oath. Next, Jews are admitted to Parliament. I don't wish to enter into a religious discussion, or to provoke a dying bigotry, but I do say, that if with the views the Jews are known to entertain of the founder of Christianity, and if with the acts of their high priests and scribes, as recorded in the New Testament, still unrepudiated by the Jewish people, they can be admitted in our national legislature, and help to make laws which are stupidly said to be protective of Christianity, then it is absurd for Christians to prosecute Freethinkers for carrying on honest criticism of doctrines and tenets they don't believe, and which they think they are bound to oppose and attack. Then again, the Christian oath of allegiance that used to be taken in Parliament, has been abolished. Now the House of Commons simply clings to a narrow theistic ledge. I have heard not only counsel but a judge speaking to a jury of Jesus Christ as our lord and savior, when they ought to have known—perhaps did know, but didn't remember in the heat of enthusiasm—that the jury were not bound to be Christians; that there might be some among them who knew Christianity and rejected it. That shows you, still further, that the principles and opinions which lie at the base of these proceedings are not universal as they were once; and that it is time all invidious distinctions were abolished, and all forms of opinion made to stand on their own bottom; and if they cannot stand on their own bottom, then in the name of goodness let them fall. Now these alterations in the state of society are more particularly shown in the writings of our principal men. Mr. Leslie Stephen, for instance, in anwsering the question, "Are we Christians?" says: "No. I should reply we are not Christians; a few try to pass themselves off as Christians, because, whilst substantially men of this age, they can cheat themselves into using the old charms in the desperate attempt to conjure down alarming social symptoms; a great number call themselves Christians, because, in one way or another, the use of the old phrases and the old forms is still enforced by the great sanction of respectability; and some for the higher reason, that they fear to part with the grain along with the chaff; but such men have ceased substantially, though only a few have ceased avowedly to be Christian in any intelligible sense of the name." No one who has any knowledge of the kind of language held by intelligent men will doubt that such sentiments are exceedingly common. You all know the great and honored name of Darwin, who spent his whole life in undermining the very foundations of Christianity and all supernatural belief. I know

when the bigotry which opposed him, and under the prostituted name of religion said, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further," saw it was evident he was victor, it professed to honor him and had him buried in Westminster Abbey; but the world is beginning to know if the Church has Darwin's corpse, it is all of Darwin that the Church has had or ever will have.

A great scientist who doesn't confine himself to mere science, as for the most part Darwin did, says: "The myths of Paganism are as dead as Osiris and Zeus, and the man who should revive them would be justly laughed to scorn; but the coeval imaginations current among the rude inhabitants of Palestine, recorded by writers whose very name and age are admitted by every scholar to be unknown, have unfortunately not yet shared their fate, but, even at this day are regarded by nine-tenths of the civilised world as the authoritative standard of fact, and the criterion of the justice of scientific conclusions in all that relates to the origin of things, and among them, of species. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered and their good name blasted by the mistaken zeal of Bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party? It is true that if philosophers have suffered their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules, and history records that whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated, scotched if not slain. But orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and though, at present, bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and end of sound science, and to visit, with such petty thunderbolts as its half-paralysed hands can hurl those who refuse to degrade nature to the level of primitive Judaism." Professor Huxley writes that, but he doesn't stand here on the charge I have to answer, and why? One is the language of a ten-and-sixpenny book, and the other the language of a penny paper.

Now, gentlemen, take another case. Dr. Maudsly says in his work on "Responsibility in Mental Disease," that Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea, the prophets, were all three mad.

(Laughter.) He doesn't stand here. Why? Because it would not be safe to attack a man like that. He is part of a powerful corporation that would rally round any of its members attacked and, therefore, he is left unmolested. Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his "Study of Sociology," speaks thus of the Christian Trinity: "Here we have theologians who believe that our national welfare will be endangered, if there is not in all churches an enforced repetition of the dogmas that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are each of them almighty; and yet there are not three almighties but one almighty; that one of the almighties suffered on the cross and descended into hell to pacify another of them; and that whosoever does not believe this 'without doubt shall perish everlastingly.'" That is language which is, perhaps, as scornful as any language a man like Mr. Herbert Spencer could use. There is no essential difference between that and language of the most militant Freethought. Mr. John Stuart Mill, who was not only a writer with a world-wide reputation, but who occupied a seat in the House of Commons, said that his father looked upon religion as the greatest enemy of morality; first by setting up "fictitious excellencies, belief in creeds, devotional feelings and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human kind—and causing these to be accepted as substitutes for genuine virtues; but, above all, by radically vitiating the standard of morals, making it consist in doing the will of a being, on whom it lavishes indeed all the phrases of adulation, but whom in sober truth it depicts as eminently hateful. I have a hundred times heard him say, that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this god, and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity." In one of those alleged libels, the only passage I shall refer to, there is a statement to the effect—a statement not in my handwriting—(unfortunately I am in the position of having not only to defend my own right but the right of others to be heard) in one of those libels, not written by me, it is said that the deity of the Old Testament is as ferocious as a tiger. What is the difference between a phrase like that and the extract I have read from the writings of John Stuart Mill? It is even worse to say "that the god of Christianity is the perfection of conceivable wickedness." The difference is that one is the language of a nine-shilling book, and the other the language of a penny paper. Writers and publishers of nine-shilling books should not be allowed to go scot free and the writers of penny papers be made the scape-

goat of the cultured agnostics of the day. John Stuart Mill, in another book, says: "Think of a being who could be the idealisation of wickedness." That is the language of John Stuart Mill. His great friend, George Grote, the author of the "History of Greece," is commonly admitted to be the author of a little book, "An Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion," which he put together from the notes of that great jurisprudist Jeremy Bentham, in which natural religion is described as one historic craze, the foe of the human race, and its doctrines and priesthood are denounced in the most extreme language. I will ask your attention to another writer. Lord Derby—who has given his support to a movement for the abolition of the blasphemy laws—some months ago, presiding at a meeting at Liverpool, said Mr. Matthew Arnold was one of the few men who had a rightful claim to be considered a thinker. He is a writer of culture so fine that some people say he is a writer of haughty-culture. (Laughter.) In his fine and delicate way he ridicules the Christian Trinity. He says: "In imagining a sort of infinitely magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury, with a race of vile offenders to deal with, whom his natural goodness would incline him to let off, only his sense of justice will not allow it; then a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his father and very dear to him, who might live in grandeur and splendor if he liked, but who prefers to leave his home, to go and live among the race of offenders, and to be put to an ignominious death, on condition that his merits shall be counted against their demerits, and that his father's goodness shall be restrained no longer from taking effect, but any offender shall be admitted to the benefit of it on simply pleading the satisfaction made by the son; and then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously nevertheless, and who is busy in applying everywhere the benefits of the son's satisfaction and the father's goodness." Again, the same writer says: "For anyone who weighs the matter well, the missionary in clerical coat and gaiters whom one sees in woodcuts preaching to a group of picturesque orientals, is from the inadequacy of his criticism, both of his hearer's religion and of his own, and his signal misunderstanding of the very volume he holds in his hand, a hardly less grotesque object in his intellectual equipment for his task than in his outward attire." The same writer actually introduces, by way of showing the absurdities into which Christians themselves have run, a long and learned discussion which took place at the University of Paris nearly three centuries ago, as to whether Jesus at his ascension had his clothes on, or appeared naked before his disciples; and if he did, what became of his clothes?

(Laughter.) If such a thing had appeared in the "Freethinker," the junior counsel for the prosecution would have said "they are bringing our savior's name into contempt, they are reproaching the Christian religion, and we bring them before you that they may be handed over to the tender mercies of the law." Mr. Matthew Arnold is in no fear of prosecution; it is only the poorer and humbler Freethinkers who are to be attacked. Mr. John Morley—who has thrown his great influence in the scale against me—in his book on "Voltaire," says, "That a religion which has shed more blood than any other religion has no right to quarrel over a few epigrams." There are writings of Voltaire's which, if published in England now, would be made the subject of a prosecution, if there was any honesty in conducting these prosecutions. Mr. Morley now joins the chorus of those who howl the false word "indecent" at me; but no living person, no sentence under this old law, can rob me of the esteem of my friends or the approval of my conscience; and I say deliberately, I would rather be sitting down in my cell, or meditatively walking up and down with racking anxiety at my breast, than walk into the House of Commons throwing my past behind me, and treating those whose views are essentially identical with mine with all the rancor of a renegade.

Lord Amberley, who is not even a plebeian, writes as follows of the Old Testament: "Such a catalogue of crimes would be sufficient to destroy the character of any Pagan divinity whatever. I fail to perceive any reason why the Jews alone should be privileged to represent their god as guilty of such actions without suffering the inference which in other cases would undoubtedly be drawn—namely, that their conceptions of deity were not of a very exalted order, nor their principles of morals of a very admirable kind. There is, indeed, nothing extraordinary in the fact that, living in a barbarous age, the ancient Hebrews should have behaved barbarously. The reverse would rather be surprising. But the remarkable fact is, that their savage deeds, and the equally savage ones attributed to their god, should have been accepted by Christendom as growing in the one case from the commands, in the other, from the immediate action of a just and beneficent being. When the Hindus relate the story of Brahma's incest with his daughter, they add that the god was bowed down with shame on account of his subjugation by ordinary passion. But while they thus betray their feeling that even a divine being is not superior to all the standards of morality, no such consciousness is ever apparent in the narrators of the passions of Jehovah. While far worse offences are committed by him, there is no trace in his character of the grace of shame." If that had appeared in the "Free-

thinker " it would have formed one of the counts of the indictment. But no one has interfered with Lord Amberley. A question was asked by the junior counsel for the prosecution of one witness, whether a certain illustration in one of the numbers was meant to caricature almighty god. The question was stopped by his lordship. With Lord Amberley's words before us, it is easy to understand that could not be meant to represent almighty god. A man who after careful reflexion, after weighing evidence, after exercising his full intellectual and moral faculties upon the question, has arrived at the conclusion that there is an infinite spirit of the universe akin to ours, though greater —such a man would never hear any ridicule or sarcasm from my lips, or from the pen or lips of any Freethinker in the country, because his belief is not amenable to such criticism or attack. It is not almighty god who could be ridiculed in a picture like that. It is the Hebrew deity—the deity of semi-barbarous people who lived 3000 years ago ; a deity reflecting their own barbarity, who told them to go to lands they never tilled, and cities they had never built, to take possession of them in the name of god, and brutally murder every man, woman, and child in them. Can it be a crime to ridicule or even to caricature a mythological personage like this? It is not almighty god who is ridiculed, it is simply the deity of those barbarous Hebrews who have become decent and civilised now. The influences of culture and humanity are at work, and although we utter the same old shibboleths, we have different ideas, different tastes, and I hope different aspirations.

The Duke of Somerset has openly impugned the Christian religion. He gives up the deity of Jesus, and criticises in a hostile manner the holy scripture. If the law were put in force fairly, it would be put in force there. Shelley has been referred to. Shelley wrote, among other poems, one called "Queen Mab." He speaks of the deity of the Christians as a vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend, whose mercy is a nickname for the rage of tameless tigers, hungering for blood. As the rest of this extract is couched in similar language, I forbear, out of consideration for the feelings of those who may differ from me, from reading further. But what I have read is sufficient to show that Shelley's writing is as blasphemous as anything that is to be found in any of these alleged libels. And in one of his maturer poems, that magnificent "Ode to Liberty," he speaks of Christ as the "Galilean serpent"—

> "The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
> And made thy world an indistinguishable heap."

Nobody thinks of prosecuting those who sell Shelley's works

now, and even the leading counsel for the prosecution could actually accept office under a Ministry, of which the First Lord of the Admiralty, on whose bookstalls Shelley's works are exposed for sale, was a member. Of the poets of our day, it may be said, three-fourths of them write quite as blasphemously, according to the language of the prosecution, as any one in the "Freethinker." Mr. Swinburne, one of our greatest, if not our greatest poet—some say he is our greatest, I don't think so—uses in a poetical form the same language that was used by Elijah to the priests of Baal. You will remember the priests of Baal and Elijah had a sort of competitive theological examination, and they put the question to a practical test. They built altars and they cried respectively on their gods. The priests of Baal cut and gashed themselves and cried aloud, but the fire would not come. What did Elijah do? Did he call them to a kind of theological discussion, and say: "Now there is a mistake somewhere, and we must thrash this out according to the well-known canons of logic?" No, he turned upon the priests with what Rabelais would call *sanglante dérision*, and he said, in the language of to-day: "Where is your god, what is he doing, why doesn't he answer you, has he gone on a journey, what is the matter with him?" That is the language of irony and the deadliest sarcasm, and it is a wonder to me the priests of Baal didn't turn round and kill the prophet on the spot. If they had had one tithe of the professed religious bigotry of our prosecutors they would have done so, but history doesn't record that they did. Mr. Swinburne, in his great "Hymn to Man," turns the same kind of derision on the priests of Christendom. He represents them as calling upon their deity, and he says: "Cry aloud, for the people blaspheme." Then he says, by way of finish:—

"Kingdom and will hath he none in him left him, nor warmth in his breath;
Till his corpse be cast out of the sun will ye know not the truth of his death?
Surely, ye say, he is strong, though the times be against him and men,
Yet a little, ye say, and how long, till he come to show judgment again?
Shall god then die as the beasts die? who is it hath broken his rod?
O god, lord god of thy priests, rise up now and show thyself god.
They cry out, thine elect, thine aspirants to heavenward, whose faith is as flame;
O thou the lord god of our tyrants, they call thee, their god by thy name.

By thy name that in hell-fire was written, and burned at the point of thy sword,
Thou art smitten, thou god, thou art smitten; thy death is upon thee, O lord.
And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—
Glory to man in the highest! for man is the master of things."

In his lines apostrophising Jesus on the Cross he says:—

"O hidden face of man, whereover
The years have woven a viewless veil—
If thou wast verily man's lover,
What did thy love or blood avail?
Thy blood the priests make poison of,
And in gold shekels coin thy love.

So when our souls look back to thee
They sicken, seeing against thy side,
Too foul to speak of or to see,
The leprous likeness of a bride,
Whose kissing lips through his lips grown
Leave their god rotten to the bone.

When we would see thee man, and know
What heart thou hadst toward men indeed,
Lo, thy blood-blackened altars; lo,
The lips of priests that pray and feed
While their own hell's worm curls and licks
The poison of the crucifix.

Thou bad'st let children come to thee;
What children now but curses come?
What manhood in that god can be
Who sees their worship, and is dumb?
No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified.

Nay, if their god and thou be one,
If thou and this thing be the same,
Thou shouldst not look upon the sun;
The sun grows haggard at thy name.
Come down, be done with, cease, give o'er;
Hide thyself, strive not, be no more."

Mr. Swinburne here draws a distinction which Freethinkers would draw. Freethinkers may ridicule a mythological deity;

they may ridicule miracles; but they will never ridicule the tragic and pathetic sublimities of human life, which are sacred, whether enacted in a palace or in a cottage. We know how to draw the distinction which Mr. Swinburne draws here. If the quotations I have read you had appeared in the "Freethinker" they would have formed one of the counts of the indictment. The only difference between them is, that one is in a twelve-shilling book, and and the other in a penny paper. One short extract from another poet, who is recognised as possessing the highest excellence by the greatest critics, whose writings have been praised in the "Athenæum" and the "Fortnightly Review." I am referring to Mr. James Thomson. He says:—

> "If any human soul at all
> Must die the second death, must fall
> Into that gulph of quenchless flame
> Which keeps its victims still the same,
> Unpurified as unconsumed
> To everlasting torments doomed;
> Then I give God my scorn and hate
> And turning back from Heaven's gate
> (Suppose me got there!) bow *Adieu!*
> *Almighty Devil damn me too.*"

If that language had appeared in the "Freethinker," it would have formed one of the counts of the indictment. What is the difference? Again, I say, the difference is between a five-shilling book and a penny paper. When those books were reviewed, did men point out those passages and condemn them? Not at all. They simply praised his genius; blasphemy is not taken into consideration by men who write for papers of such standing. George Eliot has written many a biting sarcasm, aimed at the popular idols of the day. She translated Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity," and Straus' "Life of Jesus," both of which are indictable at common law, though they have never been attacked. Renan, in his "Life of Jesus," supposes that the raising of Lazarus took place at a time, when under the messianic delusion the mind of Jesus had become perverted, and that he had arranged the thing with Lazarus. Anonymous books are pouring from the press. Here is one published by Williams and Norgate. It is called the "Evolution of Christianity." Speaking of the Hebrew scriptures, it says: "Truly, if the author of Exodus had been possessed of the genius of Swift, and designed a malignant satire on the god of the Hebrews, he could have produced nothing more terribly true to his malicious purpose than the grotesque parody of divine intervention in human affairs, depicted in the revolting details

of the Ten Plagues ruthlessly inflicted on the Egyptian nation." Only one other instance of ridicule. The writer, referring to the sudden and mysterious death of Ananias and Sapphira, as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, says: "Ananias and Sapphira his wife sold some property, and kept back a portion of the price. Perhaps Ananias was a shrewd practical man, distrustful of socialism, and desirous of holding something in reserve for possible contingencies. Or Sapphira may have hinted that, if anything should happen to her husband before the advent of Jesus in the clouds, she would not like the position of a pauper scrambling among the other widows for her daily rations. Whatever may have been the motives of the doomed couple, if they had been arraigned before Jesus, he would have assuredly condoned so trivial an offence; but under the new *régime* of the holy ghost, this unhappy husband and wife were condemned to instant execution." That is the language of satire, and if it had appeared in the "Freethinker," it might have formed one of the counts of our present indictment.

I have referred you to great living writers, to foreign works pouring into the country; I have referred you to anonymous writings, and now I hold one in my hand which is circulated over the country and bears the imprint of Messrs John and Abel Heywood. It speaks in this way of Christianity: "Buddhism is the only religion which has made its way by sheer moral strength; it has become the vast religion that it is, without the shedding of one drop of blood to propagate its tenets. The edifice of Christianity is polluted with blood from keystone to battlement; its tenets and dogmas are redolent of the savage reek of gore, from the death of its lamb to that fountain of blood that its poets are never tired of hymning. Misery and tears still attend its idiotic dogma of original sin, and its horrible threatenings of eternal fire. Buddhism is to Christianity as is a palace of light to a fœtid dungeon." That is being circulated wholesale by respectable publishers, and it again, I say, might have formed one of the counts of our indictment if it had appeared in the "Freethinker." Yet we know these publishers will never be molested because they are not poor, and especially because they don't happen to be friendly with a politician, whose enemies want to strike him with a religious dagger when they fail to kill him with the political sword.

I leave that and take the objection that will be raised, that we have dealt too freely in ridicule. What is it? You will remember the ending of some of the problems in Euclid, which is what is called a *reductio ad absurdum*, that is reducing a thing to an absurdity. That is ridicule. Ridicule is a method of argument.

The comic papers, in politics, are constantly using it. Why may it not be used in religious matters also? Reference was made to a caricature, in one of our political journals, which shall be nameless here. Mr. Gladstone is represented as "Number 1;" and morally the conclusion is that he was the murderer of one of his dearest friends. Nobody thinks of prosecuting that paper—the idea would be laughed at. We may caricature living statesmen, but not what are to us are dead dogmas. Surely you will not give your warrant to such an absurdity as that. Mr. Buckle says that every man should have a right to treat opinion as he thinks proper, to argue against it or to ridicule it, however "sacred" it may be. A greater writer than Buckle, John Stuart Mill, wrote an article in the "Westminster Review," on the Richard Carlile prosecutions, in the year 1824; and speaking of ridicule in that article, he says: "If the proposition that Christianity is untrue, can legally be conveyed to the mind, what can be more absurd than to condemn it, when conveyed in certain terms?" I say that this weapon of ridicule has been used by a very large proportion of the great intellectual emancipators of mankind. Socrates used it, and at the risk of offending some, I may say that Jesus used it; Lucian used it; the early Christian Fathers used it unsparingly against their Pagan contemporaries; and I might cull from their works such a collection of vituperative phrases as would throw into the shade anything that ever appeared in the "Freethinker." Luther used it, and used it well; Erasmus used it; the Lollards used it; and it was freely used in the Catholic and Protestant controversy that raged through and after the reign of Henry VIII. It has been used ever since. Voltaire used it in France. I know some may think that it is impolitic to introduce the name of Voltaire here, but Lord Brougham says that Voltaire was the greatest spiritual emancipator since the days of Luther. The only difference between such men as Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, was his illimitable wit. He had wit and his enemies hated him for it. Ridicule has been used in all times. To take ridicule from our literature you would have to go through such a winnowing and pruning process that you would destroy it. Eliminate from Byron his ridicule, eliminate from Shelley his ridicule, eliminate from other great masters their ridicule, and what a loss there would be! Ridicule is a weapon which has been used by so many great emancipators of mankind; and if we have used it, even in a coarser manner than they, it is the same weapon; and if the weapon is a legal one there can be no illegality in the mere method of using it, and there has been no such illegality shown. If ridicule is a legal weapon, the mere style or manner cannot render it illegal. I say that it is a dangerous thing to make men amenable to criminal

prosecution simply on a question of opinion and taste. Really if you are to eliminate ridicule from religious controversy, you hand it over entirely to the dunces. The two gravest things living are the owl and the ass. But we don't want to become asinine or owl-like. (Laughter.) It seems to me, if I may make a pun, that the gravest thing in the world is the grave; and if gentlemen want the world to be utterly grave they will turn it into a graveyard, and that is precisely what the bigots have been trying to do for many thousands of years. I ask you not to abet them by subjecting us to a daily unseen torture—which means slow murder; which cannot kill a strong man in two or three months, but which may, in twelve months, convert him into a physical and mental wreck, may make him a byword and scorn. Another evidence forsooth of the truth and mercy of their creed!

And now, gentlemen, I will ask your attention for a minute or two to the argument about outraging people's feelings. You never heard it proposed that this should be mutual; it is always a one-sided thing. As Mill says in his great essay on "Liberty:" "With regard to what is commonly meant by intemperate discussion, namely invective, sarcasm, personality, and the like, the denunciation of these weapons would deserve more sympathy if it were ever proposed to interdict them equally to both sides; but it is only desired to restrain the employment of them against the prevailing opinion: against the unprevailing they may not only be used without general disapproval, but will be likely to obtain for him who uses them the praise of honest zeal and righteous indignation." I should regard with more favor this argument if it were attempted to be made mutual. Suppose I were to put into your hands a book like that of Father Pinamonti's "Hell open to Christians," which is circulated by the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. It contains a picture of the torments of hell for every day in the week. That is repulsive to my mind. In my opinion it would debauch the minds of children into whose hands it fell, but I should not think of calling in the law to stop it. Opinion and taste must correct opinion and taste, and the proper jury to sit upon such a question is the great outside jury of public opinion. Indecent attacks on religion it is said must be put down. I want you to cast out of your minds altogether the absurd talk of indecency or licentiousness. If we are to be brought in guilty, let it be of clean blasphemy if you will; and don't by confusing the real nature of our alleged offence, say that if we ought not to be punished for blasphemy, we ought to be punished for indecency, of which I say we are not guilty.

It is said we must not make ourselves a nuisance. I have looked through the law of nuisance, and I don't think there is anything in it to which this libel can approximate. If a man

starts chemical works close to you, and poisons the atmosphere you breathe, you have no remedy but to go to law and stop it, or else remove your business and residence. That is trenching on your rights. In a case of this sort every man has his remedy. There is no Act of Parliament to compel any person to purchase a copy of the "Freethinker." The copies that will be placed in your hands were purchased, not to be read, but for the purposes of prosecution. It was not a surreptitious thing; it was not a publication entitled the "Christian Investigator," with freethought of the most insidious kind in every line. It is called the "Freethinker;" the man who purchased it must have done so deliberately, and gone into the shop to do it. As it was not a paper freely exposed in the shop windows in London, a man must have meant, before he went into the shop, to purchase that very thing, and must have known the character of the contents before be purchased it. I submit that as a man is not forced to purchase or read the paper, the least he can do is to allow other people to exercise their rights. It appears now that liberty is to be taken in the sense of the rough Yankee, who defined it as the right to do as he pleased and to make everybody else do so too. Bigotry puts forward a claim, not only to be protected from having unwelcome things forced on its attention, but to prevent all men from seeing what it happens to dislike.

Now, I will just draw your attention to what we have been told is the proper view of this question. Starkie on "Libel" has been quoted. I have not got Starkie's work, but I have got Folkard's edition of the "Law of Libel," and I must quote from that. The fact that I have not been able to get a copy of Starkie shows in itself the ridiculous nature of this prosecution. That a man should be in peril of losing his liberty on the dictum of "the late Mr. Starkie" is a most dreadful thing. I hope that won't continue. He says: "A malicious and mischievous intention, or what is equivalent to such an intention in law, as well as in morals—a state of apathy and indifference to the interests of society—is the broad boundary between right and wrong." I say it is not so, and that an overt act of crime is broad boundary between right and wrong. If it be alleged I am apathetic to the interests of society, I give it the most emphatic denial. When "nefarious profit" is talked about, I tell the learned gentlemen for the prosecution that they get far more out of their advocacy than I do out of mine. I tell them that a man who throws in his lot with an unpopular cause must not count on profit; he can only count on the satisfaction of what to him is duty done. There is no such thing as apathy here to the interests of society. I have given of my time and means, for great political and social causes, as much as these men. I am no more apathetic to the interests of society than

they are. All these words mean very little. The contention that has been raised is unsubstantial, and rests merely upon the use of adjectives. These are not questions of fact, and when the prosecution talk about "maliciously insulting," "wickedly doing so and so," they simply use a string of adjectives which every man may interpret differently from every other man, a string of adjectives which I am quite sure would not allow any jury of Freethinkers to bring in a verdict of Guilty against me and my co-defendant. I am sorry if that is the kind of law by which a man is to be tried. If it is so I can only deplore it; but it seems to me that Starkie's law of blasphemous libel is simply a noose put round the neck of every man who writes or speaks on the subject of religion; and if he happens to be on the unpopular side somebody will pull the string, and without being worse than those in the race before him, he is tripped up, and it may be strangled. I hope I am not to be tried under that law—if it must be so I can only deplore it.

I am now, gentlemen, drawing nearly to a close. I want to say that blasphemy is simply a relic of ecclesiasticism. Renan says he has searched the whole Roman law before the time of Constantine, without finding a single edict against any opinions. Professor Hunter says practically the same thing. Blasphemy and heresy were originally not tried by secular courts like these at all—they were tried by ecclesiastical courts. Lord Coke, of ancient but of great authority on the subject of law, said blasphemy belonged to the king's ecclesiastical law; and when the writ *de heretico comburendo* was abolished in the reign of Charles II., there was still special reservation made for ecclesiastical courts to try offences. But when the clergy began to lose their power over the people, the judges brought in the very heresy law that had been abolished; the same heresy with another name and a cleaner face. Without the slightest disrespect to the judges of to-day, one can maintain that in bad old times, when judges depended so much upon the favor of the Crown and the privileged classes, and when the Church of England was held necessary to the maintainance of the constitution, it was not wonderful that they should deliver judgments on the question of blasphemy, which really made it heresy as against the State Church. I say that blasphemy meant then, and always has meant, heresy against the State Church. I am told we might have discussion on controverted points of religion if decently conducted. That was not the language of those great judges of the past. They say we might discuss controverted points of the *Christian* religion—those that were controverted amongst learned Christians; but that the great dogmas that lay at the base of the articles of the Established Church could not be called in question; and I could

give judgment after judgment. But I will give you one case that happened in this century. In the case of the Queen against Gathercole, in which the defendant libelled the Scorton Nunnery, Baron Alderson laid it down: "That a person may without being liable to prosecution for it, attack *Judaism* or any religious sect (save the established religion of the country), and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the others is, because it is *the form established by law*, and it is therefore a part of the constitution of the country." Russell on "Crimes," volume 3, page 196, gives the case a little more fully. He says: "When a defendant was charged with publishing a libel upon a religious order, consisting of females, professing the Roman Catholic faith, called the Scorton Nunnery, Alderson, B., observed a person may, without being liable to prosecution for it, attack Judaism or Mahomedanism, or even any sect of the Christian religion save the established religion of the country, and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the other is, because it is the form established by law, and is therefore part of the constitution of the country."

Now, gentlemen, that supports my contention that heresy and blasphemy originally meant, and still ought to mean, simply ridicule of the State Church or denial of its doctrines; that where religious sects differ from the State Church, no matter what sect of Nonconformity it be, whether it be a section of the great Roman Catholic Church itself, or a Jewish body or Mahomedan believing in the existence of a deity, yet on those grounds, when they differ from the Established Church, they have no protection against ridicule or sarcasm at law. Gentlemen, will you yield that preposterous and invidious right to the Established Church? If any of you is a Dissenter, remember the murders, the robberies, and the indignities inflicted on your ancestors by the State Church. If any one of you is a Quaker, remember that the gaols of London were full of your ancestors who literally rotted away in them. Gentlemen, remember that, and don't give this State Church any protection. Is it to be protected against ridicule, sarcasm, or argument, or other forms of attack? It has its livings worth ten or twelve millions a year; its has its edifices for worship in every parish of the country; it has funds for the purposes of propaganda and defence apart from its State connexions. It has had, until very recently, practically all the educational appliances in its own hands; and is it, gentlemen, to be protected against the onslaughts of a few comparatively poor men? If a Church with such advantages cannot hold it own, in the name of truth let it go down. To prosecute us in the interests of this Church, though ostensibly in the name of god, is to prostitute all that is sacred in religion, and to degrade what should be a great spiritual power,

into a mere police agent, a haunter of criminal courts, and an instructor of Old Bailey special pleaders.

Every man has a right to three things—protection for person, property, and character, and all that can be legitimately derived from these. The ordinary law of libel gives a man protection for his character, but it is surely monstrous that he should claim protection for his opinions and tastes. All that he can claim is that his tastes shall not be violently outraged against his will. I hope, gentlemen, you will take that rational view of the question. We have libelled no man's character, we have invaded no man's person or property. This crime is a constructed crime, originally manufactured by priests in the interests of their own order to put down dissent and heresy. It now lingers amongst us as a legacy utterly alien to the spirit of our age, which unfortunately we have not had resolution enough to cast among those absurdities which Time holds in his wallet of oblivion.

One word, gentlemen, about breach of the peace. Mr. Justice Stephen said well, that no temporal punishment should be inflicted for blasphemy unless it led to a breach of the peace. I have no objection to that, provided we are indicted for a breach of the peace. Very little breach of the peace might make a good case of blasphemy. A breach of the peace in a case like this must not be constructive; it must be actual. They might have put somebody in the witness-box who would have said that reading the "Freethinker" had impaired his digestion and disturbed his sleep. (Laughter.) They might have even found somebody who said it was thrust upon him, and that he was induced to read it, not knowing its character. Gentlemen, they have not attempted to prove that any special publicity was given to it outside the circle of the people who approved it. They have not even shown there was an advertisement of it in any Christian or religious paper. They have not even told you that any extravagant display was made of it; and I undertake to say that you might never have known of it if the prosecution had not advertised it. How can all this be construed as a breach of the peace? Our indictment says we have done all this, to the great displeasure of almighty god, and to the danger of our Lady the Queen, her crown and dignity. You must bear that in mind. The law books say again and again that a blasphemous libel is punished, not because it throws obloquy on the deity—the protection of whom would be absurd—but because it tends to a breach of the peace. It is preposterous to say such a thing tends to a breach of the peace. If you want that you must go to the Salvation Army. They have a perfect right to their ideas—I have nothing to say about them; but their policy has led to actual breaches of the peace; and even in India, where, according to the law, no prosecution could be

started against a paper like the "Freethinker," many are sent to gaol because they will insist upon proeessions in the street. We have not caused tumult in the streets. We have not sent out men with banners and bands in which each musician plays more or less his own tune. (Laughter.) We have not sent out men who make hideous discord, and commit a common nuisance. Nothing of the sort is alleged. A paper like this had to be bought and our utterances had to be sought. We have not done anything against the peace. I give the indictment an absolute denial. To talk of danger to the peace is only a mask to hide the hideous and repulsive features of intolerance and persecution. They don't want to punish us because we have assailed religion, but because we have endangered the peace. Take them at their word, gentlemen. Punish us if we have endangered the peace, and not if we have assailed religion; and as you know we have not endangered the peace, you will of course bring in a verdict of Not Guilty. Gentlemen, I hope you will by your verdict to-day champion that great law of liberty which is challenged—the law of liberty which implies the equal right of every man, so long as he does not trench upon the equal right of every other man, to print what he pleases for people who choose to buy and read it, so long as he does not libel men's characters or incite people to the commission of crime.

Gentlemen, I have more than a personal interest in the result of this trial. I am anxious for the rights and liberties of thousands of my countrymen. Young as I am, I have for many years fought for my principles, taken soldier's wages when there were any, and gone cheerfully without when there were none, and fought on all the same, as I mean to do to the end; and I am doomed to the torture of twelve months' imprisonment by the verdict and judgment of thirteen men, whose sacrifices for conviction may not equal mine. The bitterness of my fate can scarcely be enhanced by your verdict. Yet this does not diminish my solicitude as to its character. If, after the recent scandalous proceedings in another court, you, as a special jury in this High Court of Justice, bring in a verdict of *Guilty* against me and my co-defendant, you will decisively inaugurate a new era of persecution, in which no advantage can accrue to truth or morality, but in which fierce passions will be kindled, oppression and resistance matched against each other, and the land perhaps disgraced with violence and stained with blood. But if, as I hope, you return a verdict of *Not Guilty*, you will check that spirit of bigotry and fanaticism which is fully aroused and eagerly awaiting the signal to begin its evil work; you will close a melancholy and discreditable chapter of history; you will proclaim that henceforth the press shall be absolutely free,

unless it libel men's characters or contain incitements to crime, and that all offences against belief and taste shall be left to the great jury of public opinion; you will earn the gratitude of all who value liberty as the jewel of their souls, and independence as the crown of their manhood; you will save yonr country from becoming ridiculous in the eyes of nations that we are accustomed to consider as less enlightened and free; and you will earn for yourselves a proud place in the annals of its freedom, its progress, and its glory.

Mr. Foote's speech, which occupied over two hours and a half in delivery, created a profound impression on the Court, and evidently aroused a feeling of admiration on the part of the jury and the Lord Chief Justice. At its close,

Lord Coleridge, addressing the jury, said: Gentlemen, I should have been glad to have summed up this evening, but the truth is, I am not very strong, and I propose, therefore, to address you in the morning, and that will give you a full opportunity of reflecting calmly on the very striking and able speech you have just heard.

SECOND DAY.

The Lord Chief Justice, in summing up to the jury, said—Gentlemen of the jury, the two prisoners, Foote and Ramsey, are indicted before you for the publication of blasphemous libels, and two questions arise. First of all, are these things in themselves blasphemous libels? secondly, if they are, is the publication of them traced home to the defendants? I will begin with the last because it is the shorter and simpler question. Both are questions entirely for you; and when you have heard what I have to say about the state of the law as I understand it, it will be for you to pronounce a general verdict of Guilty or Not Guilty. For the purposes of the second question, which I take first, I will assume that these are blasphemous libels. I assume it only for the purpose of discussing the second question, and I will discuss it on this basis. Logically, if they are not blasphemous libels, we don't want to discuss the second question. In discussing the second question, I must assume for the purpose of argument that they are blasphemous libels. Assuming these to be libels, is the publication of them traced home to the defendants? Formerly, the fact that a man was engaged in the publication of a paper of

this sort—of any sort—and that he was either editor, publisher or printer of a publication coming out from time to time, and issued under his sanction, made him in a civil action responsible for what appeared in it. It was held also to constitute a criminal libel; and although the publication may have been, in point of fact, by a servant of his, it would make him responsible in a civil action, because in a civil action he would be responsible for the acts of his servants. Yet the case of libel is a peculiar case, in the existence of which sometimes things are assumed, by great judges undoubtedly, and a series of decisions arrived at which modify the law. It was undoubtedly an anomaly in our system that in the case of libel only, facts which would not have justified a criminal conviction against a defendant in any other form of crime, did justify a conviction in the particular case of libel —seditious or even personal libel. But at the same time, in the time of Lord Campbell, when he was in the House of Lords, an Act of Parliament was passed which altered the law in that respect. The law as altered in that respect came under the consideration of the Court of Queen's Bench in the time of my predecessor Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, and was the subject matter of two decisions. I am obliged to go through this again, although I went through it with the jury who tried Mr. Bradlaugh, and, therefore, I must tell you what I told the jury in that case. In the case of the Queen and Holbrook, which was a case of this sort, there was a bad libel published on the town clerk of Portsmouth in a Portsmouth paper, and the proprietor of the paper was indicted for this libel. It was tried twice over, once before Mr. Justice Lindley and once before Mr. Justice Grove, and on both occasions the judges laid down the law sufficiently favorably as the Court of Queen's Bench were of opinion, for the person accused. They laid down the law substantially in this way. If it was proved, as in that case, that the proprietor of the paper made over absolutely the control of a particular part of the paper to a sub-editor or agent, and told him to use his own discretion, to do what he thought right from time to time in relation to that paper, Mr. Justice Lindley and Mr. Justice Grove substantially told the jury that they were at liberty to infer it was as if in each particular case the active positive sanction of the defendant had been obtained to a particular publication. Well, on both occasions that was held by the Court of Queen's Bench not to be the proper way to lay down the law since Lord Campbell's Act. And the law now is that it is not enough to connect the defendant with the publication in which the libel appears, but you must connect the defendant with the libel itself in the publication. They all say when a man has edited in any vague sense you like, when he has been editor of a particular number of a paper in which there has been a libel, that that will not do unless you

give evidence to show that he edited, sanctioned, or in some manner had to do with the particular publication incriminated. Now that is the way in which Justice Lush—of whose words I am always glad to avail myself—that is the way in which he lays down the law in the second case of the Queen and Holbrook. The section is this: "If in respect of the trial of any indictment or information for the publication of a libel, under the plea of not guilty, evidence shall have been given which shall establish a presumptive case of publication against the defendant by the act of any other person, or by his authority, it shall be competent for such defendant to prove that such publication was made without his authority, consent or knowledge, and that the said publication did not arise from want of due care and caution on his part." Then the learned judge goes on to say: "The effect of the statute, read by the light of previous decisions, must be that an authority from the proprietor of a newspaper to the editor to publish what is libellous, is no longer to be, as it formerly was, a question of law, but a question of fact." Before that Act passed, the only question of fact was whether the defendant authorised the publication of the paper. Now the question is whether he authorised the publication of the "libel." Therefore you must, in this case, have evidence to connect the two defendants with the publication of the libel as well as with the publication of the paper. Now I think you will be of opinion that this case has been very ably defended by the two persons who are incriminated, but I must say they have not defended it on the true grounds, but only on what they think true grounds. The grounds to them are true, and upon it they desire to succeed if they can—not that they would be unwilling to avail themselves of any advantage in their favor, because, in a legal sense, they would have a perfect right to stand upon the strictest technicality, if in their favor. But, as a matter of fact, they have not in their defence taken the true points. They have preferred to rest their case upon that which is the second branch of this inquiry, and they have not seriously contested that they did both authorise, sanction and engage in the publication, not only of the papers in which the libels appeared, but of the libels themselves. Still, although they have not chosen to raise that question in argument, it is proper you and I should see that there is legal evidence on which we can fairly and properly say—supposing these to be libels—you are guilty of the publication of them. Now the evidence is certainly all one way. Mr. Kelland, who is a clerk to the solicitors for the prosecution, is called, and says he purchased copies of the "Freethinker" at 28 Stonecutter Street; that he purchased, upon the 30th of June, publications of the 9th of April, the 23rd of April, the 30th of April, the 7th of May, the 14th of May—all in 1882. The publication and

purchase were in 1882. He bought at the same place a paper of the 21st of May on the 24th of May, a paper of the 28th of May on the 4th of June, and a paper of the 18th of June on the 15th of June. That I ought to explain, seeing it is published some days before the date. They have a Sunday date upon that, and the papers can be procured some days before the date, therefore the paper of the 18th of June was bought on the 15th, and then he says, "I purchased these mostly of Ramsey." Now, any of them—because really I cannot regard, and I suppose you will not regard the publication of more than one of these—three or four—of these libels, assuming them to be libels, as more than one, the first one—the publication of any of the libels is sufficient, if it be a libel, to bring the defendants within the meshes of this indictment. And if you think Ramsey sold the papers across the counter—and the witness was not cross-examined effectively upon that point, and Ramsey did not dispute that he had sold those papers to him—then as far as Ramsey is concerned, there is a distinct proof of the publication of a number of these libels at all events, because he was the proprietor of the paper and sold the copies produced in court. That, according to any view of the law, is distinct evidence of publication personally by Ramsey. As I say, Ramsey is entitled to the credit of not having seriously disputed it. He doesn't deny it. Still it is right it should be proved, and it is proved by a witness that is not cross-examined. If you believe Mr. Whittle, I don't know that it is necessary to go further, as far as Ramsey is concerned, to connect him with the actual publication of these libels. The matter stands differently as regards Foote, because Mr. Kelland, in reply to Foote, said, "I purchased none of you; never. I have seen you coming down stairs, not more than once, and that was on the 16th of February. That is the time when I said I saw you coming down stairs at Stonecutter Street." That is nothing, because in the first place it is months after these sales had taken place; and under the authority of the Queen and Holbrook, if a man is seen coming down stairs it is not sufficient for a libel. Then Mr. Edward Whittle is called, and he says he has seen Foote's writing on particular papers, but not at St. John Street. Whittle was not cross-examined. On looking at his evidence before the Lord Mayor, it did not appear there was any particular need to examine him. He said here substantially what he said before the Lord Mayor. Whittle says he is a printer, carrying on business at 170 St. John Street. "Those numbers, which are the subject-matter of the counts of the indictment, were printed by me for Ramsey. I know Foote, who has come to give me orders for anything he wanted. I have had orders from him as to some of these papers. He sent the manuscript for the 'Freethinker.' The greater part came from Foote. I

usually saw the manuscript of the 'Freethinker.' I believe a proof is sometimes pulled. I have seen proofs of the other articles. The first article, that is the article in the first count, came from Foote. I know his handwriting." This is—I won't say a friend in any bad sense, since he is an acquaintance of Foote, by reason of his having printed for Foote. He has really no hostility to Foote, but he is obliged, by force of law, to say what is the truth—that the first libel, in the first incriminated paper came from Foote, and was sent in his handwriting. If so, there is abundant evidence to show, as far as that is concerned, that he is connected with it. He takes the second, and says: "I should not like to say where it came from. To the best of my belief it came from Foote. It was in Foote's handwriting. I should imagine it came from Foote. This was put in the paper by order of Foote. This paper was printed by me by his orders." It is impossible to say that is not evidence to connect Foote with the second incriminated passage. Then they take the third. That was in Foote's manuscript, and it was printed in the paper by Foote's orders. It is impossible to say that is not evidence that Foote is connected with this. The third, that is the illustration, was put into the paper by Foote's direction. Then the fourth. Foote didn't write this one, but it was inserted in the paper by his directions. Then as to to the next count. Foote directed the insertion of this article. As to the next one, the witness said: "I don't know who wrote it, but Foote ordered it to be inserted." Then the next. "Foote didn't write this, but ordered it to be put in the paper." As to the next, witness says: "Mr. Heaford wrote this." Then the next. "Mr. Foote ordered this to be inserted." "Mr. Foote's name is on the paper." Then the last one. "He authorised this also; he has never spoken to me about the meaning of these cartoons; he has never told me he edited the paper." You will remember that yesterday, I prevented a general question put in that form, bearing in mind the Queen *v.* Holbrook. A man may be the editor of a paper but it doesn't follow, because he is the general editor of a paper, everything in that paper makes him criminally liable. It must be shown that the incriminated portions of the paper have had, so to say, his mind upon them, and that his mind has gone with the publication of them. Now on the part of young Mr. Whittle we have had this evidence, which certainly is sufficient, uncontradicted—and it is uncontradicted—to show that Foote, as well as Ramsey, was actively, and within the decision to which I have already adverted, connected with the publication of these incriminated passages. There is no evidence on the other side. I must say that Mr. Foote, in his very able speech, rather assumed that he was responsible for these publications, that he authorised them, and that his mind did go with them. Anything

he said in his speech would probably be not enough, but here is the evidence of Whittle, whom he did not cross-examine; who gave his evidence with reluctance—not unbecoming reluctance—because he was giving evidence against a person by whom he was employed. So he gives evidence which fastens on Foote the responsibility of the publication of every one of these incriminated passages. I don't know that it is proved he wrote them in the sense of having composed them, but with regard to all of them it is shown he sent them to the printer with directions to have them printed in the "Freethinker." Now that is enough to satisfy you, unless you can see some reason which I cannot suggest to you, to doubt this evidence. Supposing you assume these to be libels—Foote and Ramsey both are answerable for their publication. That, however, of course, is, comparatively speaking, the least matter which you had discussed yesterday, because the proof was clear, and the proof was not, in fact, disputed. The other point, which is first in logical relation, remains—Are these within the meaning of the law blasphemous libels? Now that is a matter that as you have been truly told is entirely for you. You have the responsibility of looking at them, and of pronouncing whether they are or are not blasphemous libels. My duty is to express to you, as clearly as I can, what is the law upon the subject; I will not say to answer, because it is not the duty of a judge to answer, the speeches made; but it is, as I conceive, his duty to point out to you which of the observations are well founded in his judgment. No one knows more than I how erring and feeble that judgment is. Still it is to be exercised to the best ability god has given me, and you must take it for what it is worth, and then the matter is for you. In addressing any jury, but more especially a jury like this, I should feel the most absolute confidence that a jury in a criminal case would obey the law as laid down, and whether they liked it or not, they would take the law from the judge and apply it like honest men to the facts; because, as I said a week before, it is far more important that the law should be administered conscientiously, than that the law in a particular case should be a good or bad law; because the moment judges or juries go beyond their functions, and take upon them to find one way or the other—not according to the law as it is but as they think it ought to be—then, instead of any certainty, anything upon which any subject can rely, we are left to an infinite variety of human opinion, to the caprice—excuse me using the expression—to the caprice that may at any moment influence the best of us, to the prejudices that bias—I will not say that, because sometimes prejudices are good—but to the feelings and prejudices which distort and disturb the judgment from the simple operation of ascertaining whether the facts proved come within the law, as they are

bound to take it. You have heard, and heard with truth, that these things are, according to old law, old dicta of old judges, undoubtedly blasphemous libels, because they asperse the truth of Christianity. I said a week ago—and I see no reason to doubt that I said correctly—in regard to these words and to these expressions, for reasons which I will give presently, from the very cases in which these expressions have been used, that can no longer be taken to be a statement of the law in the present day. It is no longer true in the sense in which it was true when those statements were made. It may be true in another sense—I don't say it is not—but it is no longer true, in the sense in which those statements were made, that Christianity is the law of the land. Jews, Nonconformists, Mahomedans, and a variety of persons in the times when these dicta proceeded from great judges, were treated as having scarcely any civil rights at all. It was impossible, in a free country, to persecute them to death, but almost everything short of persecution to death was enacted deliberately by the Parliament of this country against such persons—I don't mean by name because it was not so; and it has often been pointed out that the exclusion of the Jews was an exclusion *by accident*, although I am bound to confess I had never much faith in that. They were historically excluded, probably because, at the time when the statute was passed, they were not thought sufficiently worthy an Act of Parliament. But now—I may be in error—but as far as I know the law a Jew may be Lord Chancellor. Certainly a Jew may be Master of the Rolls; certainly, by the merest accident when the late Master of the Rolls was appointed, before the Judicature Act came into operation, a great and illustrious lawyer, whose loss the whole profession is deploring, and in whom those who were honored with his friendship knew they lost a warm friend and loyal comrade—he might have sat here and tried this very case, and he might have been called upon to say—at least if the law be correct, that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land. He, a Jew, might have been bound to lay down, according to that view, to a jury in which there might have been half a dozen Jews, that it was a breach of the law, subjecting a man to twelve months' imprisonment, to deny that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, a thing which he himself did deny, which every Jew in the land must deny, which Parliament has deliberately allowed them to deny, and which it is just as much now under the law of the land their right to deny, as it is your right and mine, if we believe it, to assert it. Therefore, to base the prosecution of an aspersion on Christianity *per se*—I shall, I hope, be taken to mean no more than I exactly express—to base a prosecution for an aspersion of Christianity *per se*, on the ground that Christianity is in the sense of Lord Hale, Lord Raymond, or Lord Tenterden, part of the law of the land, is, in my judgment, to forget that law grows

like other things, that though the principles of law remain, yet that the law grows. And it is one of the inestimable advantages of the common law that it is so, that the principles of law have to be applied to infinitely changing circumstances and to growth—some people would say towards retrogression, but I should venture to say towards progression of human opinion. Therefore, merely to discover that Christianity is denied, or the truth of Christianity is denied, on general grounds, and to say, therefore, that a man may be indicted for a blasphemous libel, is absolutely untenable; and I, for one, will certainly never, until I am bound to do so—of course I should be happy to obey the law like a dutiful subject, if it is expressed in a way I cannot fail to understand—but, until it is so expressed, I shall not lay down the law in a way which cannot be historically justified. The Acts being passed, Parliament is the maker of the laws, and if Parliament has passed laws which make the *dicta* of the old judges no longer applicable it is no disrespect to those judges to say that laws made under one state of things are no longer law under another state of things, which Parliament has altered. When I last addressed the jury on this subject I said—and I thought that I said—this shows how careful you should be—that I said what appeared to me almost a *reductio ad absurdum;* that if this were still the law of the land—I put it respectfully—I said it would be impossible to discuss any question of the law as it is, that there could be no reform, that it would not be possible to discuss the question whether a Republican or Monarchical form of Government was the best, as Harrington did in his "Oceana," and as other writers have done, without danger of being prosecuted for a seditious libel. But this case has led me to look into such few books as I possess; and what I thought was a *reductio ad absurdum* I find is held in the case of the King *v.* Bedford. There a man is prosecuted for discussing gravely and civilly, and, as the report says, "with no reflexion whatever upon any part of the existing Government." He was actually convicted of a seditious libel because he said hereditary principles were not the wisest. I find 150 years ago a man was actually convicted for gravely and seriously maintaining that which I thought could be seriously and gravely maintained without any infringement of the law. I need hardly say if the case came up now no judge or jury would convict. It would be monstrous such a thing should be done. That may show shortly that the bare statement that it is enough that these things are denials, utter denials, of the truth of the religion of Christ is not maintainable. I should not think that it was enough to show a mere denial of Christianity in the present to make the thing capable of being attacked. But, no doubt, whether we like it or not, we must not be guilty, and I must not be guilty, of anything

like taking the law into one's own hands, and to wrest the law from what it really is, and to convert it into what I may think in my foolish judgment it ought to be. I must lay down the law to you as I understand it and find it in books of authority. Mr. Foote, in his very able speech yesterday, spoke with something like contempt of the late Mr. Starkie. Well, he did not know the late Mr. Starkie, and how very able and good a man he was. When I was young I knew him. He was not only a man of remarkable powers of mind—perhaps he never had his rightful estimate in the world—he was a man of liberal opinions, and a person in whose hands—if law-making can be safe in anyone's hands—I should have thought it might be safely left. Whether I am right or not is immaterial, because this view of Mr. Starkie's has been again and again assented to, and it appears to me to contain a correct statement of the existing state of the law. He says: "There are no questions of more intense and awful interest than those which concern the relations between the creator and the beings of his creation; and though, as a matter of discretion and prudence, it might be better to leave the discussion of such matters to those who, from their education and habits, are most likely to form correct conclusions, yet it cannot be doubted that any man has a right, not merely to judge for himself on such subjects, but also, legally speaking, to publish his opinions for the benefit of others. When learned and acute men enter upon those discussions with such laudable motives, their very controversies, even where one of the antagonists must necessarily be mistaken, so far from producing mischief, must in general tend to the advancement of truth and the establishment of religion on the firmest and most stable foundations. The very absurdity and folly of an ignorant man, who professes to teach and enlighten the rest of mankind, are usually so gross as to render his errors harmless; but be this as it may, the law interferes not with his blunders so long as they are honest ones—justly considering that society is more than compensated for the partial and limited mischief which may arise from the mistaken endeavors of honest ignorance by the splendid advantages which result to religion and truth from the exertions of free and unfettered minds. It is the mischievous abuse of this state of intellectual liberty which calls for penal censure. The law visits not the honest errors but the malice of mankind. A wilful intention to pervert, insult, and mislead others by means of licentious and contumelious abuse applied to sacred subjects, or by wiful misrepresentations or artful sophistry, calculated to mislead the ignorant and unwary, is the criterion and test of guilt. Malicious and mischievous intention, or what is equivalent to such an intention in law as well as morals—a state of apathy and indifference to the interests of society—is the broad boundary

between right and wrong." Now, gentlemen, I believe that to be a correct statement of law. Whatever it ought to be, the law is not a matter for you or me. I have only to ascertain what is the law, and, having ascertained it, to explain it to you, as far as my powers of explanation enable me, and to leave you to apply the facts to the particular case before you. I cannot help saying there is a great deal that strikes my mind in the way in which Mr. Foote dealt with this passage on these principles of Mr. Starkie, but there is more to be said, I think, than at first sight perhaps, appears; and there is a passage in this same book of Mr. Starkie's—not a passage of his own, as I understand it, though it is not quite clear whether it is or not, but I believe it to be a translation from the work of Michaelis, in which he says that which is true enough. He says it is not clear whether it is a bad thing for the libeller that he should be punished by the law rather than by the rougher handling of an angry populace. And he says: "Were the religion in question only tolerated, still the State is bound to protect every person who believes it from such outrages, or it cannot blame him if he has not the patience to bear them. But if it be the established national religion—and of course the person not believing it, is only tolerated by the State, though he enjoys its protection just as if he were in a strange house—such an outrage is excessively gross, and unless we conceive the people so tame as to put up with any affront, and of course likely to play but a very despicable part on the stage of the world, the State has only to choose between the two alternatives of either punishing the blasphmer himself, or else leaving him to the fury of the people. The former is the milder plan, and, therefore, to be preferred, because the people are apt to gratify their vengeance without sufficient inquiry, and of course it may light on the innocent. Nor is this by any means a right which I only claim for the religion which I hold to be the true one; I am also bound to admit it, when I happen to be among a people from whose religion I dissent. Were I in a Catholic country to deride their saints, or insult their religion by my behavior, were it only rudely and designedly putting on my hat, where decency would have suggested the taking it off; or where I in Turkey to blaspheme Mahomet, or in a heathen city, its gods—nothing would be more natural than for the people, instead of suffering it, to avenge the insult in their usual way—that is tumultously, passionately, and immediately; or else the State would, in order to secure me from the effects of their fury, be under the necessity of taking my punishment upon itself; and if it does so, it does a favor both to me and other dissenters from the established religion, because it secures us from still greater evils. Therefore it is not so clear to my mind that some sort of protection of the constituted religion of the country is not a good

thing even to those who differ from it because if there were no such protection the consequences pointed out by Michaelis might ensue. It does not follow that because the objects of popular dislike differ in different ages—it does not follow (I wish it did) that the populace of one age is much wiser than the populace of another. It is not so very long ago since a Birmingham mob wrecked the house of Dr. Priestley, as good, distinguished and illustrious a man as probably has ever been an English subject. And that was not, remember, the State that did that—it was the populace that wrecked his house and destroyed his library. Therefore, it is not quite so sure to my mind, that some sort of blasphemy laws, reasonably enforced, are not to the advantage of persons who differ from the religion of the country, and who are intending and desire to destroy it. Therefore, it must not be taken as so absolutely certain that all those laws against blasphemy are tyrannical. It is not so sure, when you come to look at the matter calmly and quietly, and not from Mr. Foote's or Mr. Maloney's point of view, it is not so sure that some kind of law of this sort is not advantageous. However, the principle is to be found laid down in Starkie, and that principle is as I have expressed it to you. I think it right to say that the cases that I have quoted to you—I don't pretend that I have the time or the learning to read every case written upon the subject—but the cases which I have been able to study, do not satisfy me that the law was ever different from the way in which Starkie has laid it down. I have taken three cases, about seventy or eighty years apart, and I find that the law, as I understand it, is laid down exactly the same in all those three cases. The first case is a case decided by that great lawyer of whom Mr. Foote spoke, Lord Hale. He rightly said he was a man of absolute integrity and great intellectual force; and perhaps if he had read, as I have done, all the trial of the witches before Lord Hale, he would have seen that Lord Hale was there doing, what many a judge has to do—was administering a law he did not like, and so gave the accused person every advantage which his skill and the law allowed him, but neither the prisoners nor jury would take advantage of it. The case is a very curious one, and if any one reads it, I think it would be a very rough analysis of it to say, that Lord Hale hung people for witchcraft because of a passage in the Bible, though, no doubt, the passage was referred to. Anybody who will be at the pains to read that case will say there is more to be said for Lord Hale than the general run of mankind believe. Lord Hale in the case of Taylor had these words before him—and you must always take a case according to the subject matter it decides, and the opinion contained—these expressions, terrible to read, namely, "That Jesus Christ was a bastard, a

whoremaster, an imposter, and a cheat, and that he, Taylor, neither feared god, man, nor devil." Those were the words upon which Lord Hale had to decide in that case, and Lord Hale said that such kinds of blasphemous words were not only an offence against god and religion, but a crime against the laws and therefore punishable. He did not say that a grave argument against the truth of revelation was so punishable, but that such kind of wicked and blasphemous words were. That is what Lord Hale held in that case. That is one of the earliest cases on the subject. You may find expressions which seem to go further, but you ought to look before you cite these cases so glibly as some people do. You should look and see what was the subject matter of the decision. Lord Hale held that to be a blasphemous libel, and if it was a matter of law I should be compelled to say it was a blasphemous libel, though I trust I am not disposed to hang witches. (Laughter.) But I believe that to be a perfectly accurate description of the state of the law as it is at present. The next case which has been so much cited from Strange, although it is better reported from Fitz-Gibbon, is that of Woolston, who was convicted of blasphemous discourses on the miracles of our lord, and the Court laid very great stress on the words in the indictment "general and indecent attacks," and stated that they did not intend to include disputes between men on controverted points. That is the law as laid down by Lord Raymond. The case that has been commonly cited as bringing it down later is that of the King *v.* Waldington, which was decided by Lord Tenterden, and the words of the libel were—"That Jesus Christ was an impostor, a murderer and a fanatic." The Lord Chief Justice laid it down that that was a libel, and a juryman asked the Lord Chief Justice whether a work that denied the divinity of our savior was a libel. Now mark the answer given by Lord Tenterden, one of the most cautious and justly respected men. He answered, that a work speaking of Jesus Christ in the language referred to was a libel. His answer is that a work speaking of Jesus Christ in the language used in the publication in ques-question is a libel, and I have read the words. That case came before the King's Bench, which consisted of Lord Tenterden, Mr. Justice Bayley, Mr. Justice Holroyd, with Mr. Justice Best. The three first-named judges being as great lawyers as ever sat upon the Bench, and I think no one would compare Mr. Justice Best with Lord Tenterden, Mr. Justice Bayley, or Mr. Justice Holroyd. When the case was moved to the King's Bench, Lord Tenterden said: "I told the jury that any publication in which our savior was spoken of in the language used in this publication was a libel, and I have no doubt whatever that it is so. I have no doubt it is a libel to publish the words that our savior

was an impostor, a murderer, and a fanatic." Mr. Justice Bayley says: "It appears to me that the direction of the Lord Chief Justice was perfectly right. There cannot be any doubt that a work which does not merely deny the godhead of Jesus Christ, but which states him to have been an impostor and a murderer is at common law a blasphemous libel." Mr. Justice Holroyd says: "I have no doubt whatever that any publication in which Jesus Christ is spoken of in the language used in this work is a blasphemous libel, and that therefore the direction was right in point of law." Mr. Justice Best gives a longer judgment, in somewhat more rhetorical language, but to the same effect; and he concludes: "It is not necessary for me to say whether it be libelous to argue from the scriptures against the divinity of Christ. That is not what the defendant professes to do." Then he says: "The Legislature has never altered the law, nor can it ever do so while the Christian religion is considered to be the basis for that law. There is a case which is often cited as an authority to show that to deny or dispute the truth of Christianity is an offence against the law, because there is a statement that Christianity is part, or ought to be part and parcel of the law of the land. That is the case of the King *v.* Waddington, which is one of the latest which binds me here, and upon which I shall be bound to direct you. I think when you come to consider the cases you will very much doubt whether the old law is open to the strong attacks that have been made upon it. I doubt extremely whether, if you come carefully and quietly to look at and read through—not merely look at—the notes and extracts read from cases, and master the facts of the cases upon which those old decisions were pronounced—I doubt if they will be found to be so illiberal and harsh as it has been the fashion to describe them in modern times. After all, I say as I said before, that Parliament has altered the law on the subject; it is no longer the law that none but holders of the Christian religion can take part in the State, or have rights in the State; but, on the contrary, others have just as much right in civil matters as any member of the Church of England has. The condition of things is no longer the same as it was when those great judges pronounced those judgments which I respectfully think have been misunderstood, and strained to a meaning they do not warrant. It is a comfort to think that things have been altered, because I observe that in the case of the Attorney-General *v.* Pearson, which is a very interesting case, decided in 1817 by Lord Eldon, it seems there was some doubt expressed as to whether the 9th and 10th William the Third as to persons denying the Trinity were still in operation. I do not want to be a defender of old things; they are shocking enough, and under this Act men are prevented

from holding any kind of office if they deny this or that; in short, if he does not hold the Thirty-nine Articles a man is liable to punishment, and after a second offence still more terrible things are to follow. It must be remembered what was the state of the country at the time that statute was passed, who was the king upon the throne, the state of political factions, what were the feelings that not unnaturally agitated men's minds. And regard being had to all that—I am not going to defend it for a moment, I do not say it is to be defended—then it is to be a good deal more explained than at first sight appears. At all events, it is enough to say no man could dream of enacting 9th and 10th William the Third at the present day; and I hope and trust that Lord Eldon's doubts as to whether some parts of these are still in existence will never be brought to a solution in a court of law which says they are well founded. Such are the rules by which you are to judge of these libels. You have heard a great deal—and here is the least pleasant part of my duty, which I wish I could avoid—you have heard a great deal very powerfully put to you by Mr. Foote, about the inexpediency of these laws, and the way these laws are worked. It might, perhaps, be enough to say that is a matter with which you and I have nothing to do. What we have to do is simply to administer the law as we find it; and if we find the law such as we don't like, the only thing to do is to try to get it altered, and in a free country, after discussion, public agitation, and excitement, a change is always effected, if it approves itself to the general sense of the community. But there is no doubt it has been very well put to you, and it is worth observation that there is a good deal to be said for the view Mr. Foote has so ably put forward. It is true if this movement is to be regarded as persecution, it is perfectly true—unless persecution is thorough-going—it seldom succeeds. Mere irritation, mere annoyance, mere punishment that stops short of extermination, have very seldom the effect of altering men's religious convictions. I suppose—because they are passed away—I suppose that, quite without one fragment of rhetorical exaggeration, I may say that the penal laws, which fifty or sixty years ago were enforced in Ireland, were unparalleled in the history of the world. They had existed 150 years; they had produced upon the religious convictions of the people absolutely no effect whatever. You could not exterminate the Irish people. You did everything that was possible by law, short of actual violence and extermination, but without the slightest effect. And, therefore, there is no doubt that the observation is a correct one, that persecution, as a general rule, unless it is more thorough-going, than, at any rate, in England, and in the nineteenth century, anybody would stand—is, generally speaking, of little avail. It is also true—and I cannot help assenting to it—

that it is a very easy form of virtue. A difficult form of virtue is quietly and unostentatiously to obey what you believe to be god's will in your own lives. It is not very easy to do that and if you do it, you don't make much noise in the world. It is very easy to turn upon somebody who differs from you, and in the guise of zeal for god's honor, to attack somebody who differs from you in point of opinion, but whose life will be very much more pleasing to god, whom you profess to honor, than your own. When it is done by persons whose own lives are full of pretending to be better than their neighbors, and who take that particular form of zeal for god which consists in putting the criminal law in force against somebody else—that does not, in many people's minds, create a sympathy with the prosecutor, but rather with the defendant. There is no doubt that will be so; and if they should be men—I don't know anything about these persons—but if they should be men who enjoy the wit of Voltaire, and who do not turn away from the sneer of Gibbon, but rather relish the irony of Hume—one's feelings do not go quite with the prosecutor, but one's feelings are rather apt to sympathise with the defendants. It is still worse if the person who takes this course takes it not from a kind of rough notion that god wants his assistance, and that he can give it—less on his own account than by prosecuting others—or if it is mixed up with anything of a partisan or political nature, then it is impossible that anything can be more foreign from one's notions of what is high-minded, religious, and noble. Indeed, I must say it strikes me that anyone who would do that not for the honor of god, but for his own purposes, is entitled to the most disdainful disapprobation that the human mind can form. However, the question here is not with the motives—of which I know nothing—nor with the character, of which I know less, of the prosecutors, or those who instituted these proceedings, but with the proceedings themselves, and whether they are legal. The way in which that matter has been dealt with by Mr. Foote is extremely able and well worthy of your attention; and it is for you to say, after a few words from me, what effect it produces upon your minds. Mr. Foote's case is, as I understand it, this—he will forgive me if I do not quite state it accurately: "I am not going to maintain that this is in the best taste; some of it may be coarse, some of it may to men of education give offence. It is intended to be an attack on Christianity; it is distinctly intended to be an attack on what I have seen in the publications of cultivated agnosticism. It is meant to point out that in the books, which you Christians and professing Christians call sacred, are to be found records of detestable crimes, of horrible cruelties, all of which are said to have been pleasing to almighty god. I do mean to attack this representation of god. I mean to say all that is not true; I say it

is a detestable superstition. I mean it, and if I have said it in coarse language, that is because (though he need not have said this) I have not sufficient education or culture to cull my words carefully; but I will bring before you a number of books, sold upon every bookstall, written by persons admitted to the very highest society in the land, in which not only are the same things to be found, in point of matter, but I will read you passages in which there is very little difference between the matter and the manner, and I will read you, for example, passages from Mr. John Stuart Mill, Mr. Grote, passages from Shelley, and from other persons. I mention those who are dead so as not to wound the feelings of any. Nobody ever dreamed of attacking Shelley (that is not quite correct, for the publisher was prosecuted, and he himself was deprived by Lord Eldon of the custody of his children). I will show you, says the defendant, things written by them quite as strong and as coarse as anything to be found in these publications of mine; and, says Mr. Foote, it is plain the law cannot be as suggested, because it cannot be said that a poor man can not do what a rich man may; it cannot be said you may blaspheme in civil language. And more than that, he says, "I will show you that the manner of some of these publications is no better than mine." Let me say upon that subject two things; one is in Mr. Foote's favor and one is against him. He wished strongly to have brought to your minds that in the sense in which Starkie used the words—that is the ordinary sense of the word licentious—Mr. Foote is anxious to have it impressed on you that he is not a licentious writer, and that this word does not fairly apply to his publications. You will have the documents before you, and you must judge for yourselves. I should say that he is right. He may be blasphemous, but he certainly is not licentious, in the ordinary sense of the word; and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind. That is a thing in his favor, and is entitled to be said. With regard to the other point, if the law as I have laid it down to you is correct, so far as the decencies of controversies are observed—as far as I can see, it always has been the law, and certainly I lay down as law to you now—that if decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libels. There may be many great and grave writers who have attacked the foundations of Christianity. Mr. Mill, undoubtedly, did so, and some great living writers may also have attacked Christianity; but no one can read these articles without seeing a difference between them and the incriminated publications which I am obliged to say is not a difference of degree but of kind. There is a grave, earnest, reverent—perhaps I may say religious—tone about the

very attacks upon Christianity itself, which show that what is aimed at is not insult to the opinions of the majority of mankind, or the holders of Christianity, but a real, quiet, earnest pursuit of the truth. If the truth at which they have arrived is not the truth we have been taught, and which, perhaps, if we thought for ourselves we should arrive at, yet because their conclusions differ from ours, they are not to be the subject matter of a criminal indictment. Therefore with regard to many of the people whose writings have been very properly brought before you by Mr. Foote—with regard to many of those persons I should say they are within the protection of the law and are well within the authority of the passage I have read to you, and which I remind you of, as containing my judgment. With regard to some of the others from whom Mr. Foote quoted passages, I heard many of them for the first time. I do not at all question that Mr. Foote read them correctly. They are passages which, hearing them only from him for the first time, I confess I have a difficulty in distinguishing from the incriminated publication. They do appear to me to be open to exactly the same charge and the same grounds of observation that Mr. Foote's publications are. He says—and I don't call upon him to prove it, I am quite willing to take his word—he says many of these things are written in expensive books, published by publishers of known eminence, and that they circulate in the drawing-rooms, studies, and libraries of persons of position. It may be so. All I can say here is—and so far I can answer for myself—I would make no distinction between Mr. Foote and anybody else; and if there are persons, however eminent they may be, who used language, not fairly distinguishable from that used by Mr. Foote, and if they are ever brought before me—which I hope they never may be, for a more troublesome or disagreeable business can never be inflicted upon me—if they come before me, so far as my poor powers go, they shall have neither more nor less than the justice I am trying to do to Mr. Foote; and if they offend the Blasphemy Laws they shall find that so long as these laws exist—whatever I may think about their wisdom—they will have but one rule of law laid down in this court. That Mr. Foote may depend upon, and I admit, as far as I can judge, some of them, that they are strong, shall I say coarse expressions of contempt and hatred for the recognised—generally recognised—truths as we take or have accepted them of Christianity, and of the Hebrew Scriptures, which are said to have been inspired of god himself. Mr. Foote must however forgive me for saying that that is no argument in his favor. It is no argument for a burglar—I mean nothing offensive to him—I should be unworthy of my position if I insulted anyone in his position—it is no argument in favor of a

burglar to say that some other person has committed a burglary. Because some persons may have escaped, in the infinite variety of human affairs, that is no reason why others should not be brought to justice. If he is right in his quotations from these writers, it appears to me they are fairly subject matter of such a prosecution as this. Suppose they are, it does not show that he is not. What Mr. Foote had to show—which he did to the best of his ability, and it is not his fault if the law is against him—what he had to show was, not that other people were bad, but that he was good; not that other persons were guilty, but that he was innocent. And it is no answer to bring forward these cases, some of which I confess I cannot distinguish from some of these incriminated articles. It is not enough to say these persons have done these things if they are not brought before us. I not only admit, but I urge upon you, and everybody who hears my opinion, that whilst laxity in the administration of the law is bad, the most odious is the discriminating laxity, which lays hold of particular persons and does not lay hold of others liable to the same censure. That may be, and is so, but it has nothing to do with this case. The case is here, not whether other persons ought to be standing where Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey stand, but what judgment you ought to pass upon them. We have to administer this law, whether we like it or not. It is, undoubtedly, a disagreeable law, but I have given you reasons for thinking it is not quite so bad, or quite so indefensible, as Mr. Foote, from his point of view, thinks it is. On the contrary, I think it is a just law that persons should be obliged to respect the feelings and opinions of those amongst them. I assent to the passage of Michaelis, that in a Catholic country we have no right to insult Catholic opinion, nor in a Mahomedan country have we any right to insult Mahomedan opinion. I differ from both, but I should feel that I was bound to treat with respect opinions with which I might not agree. You will see these publications, and if you think they are permissible attacks upon the religion of the country you will find the defendants Not Guilty; but if you think that they do not come within the most liberal and the largest view that anyone can give of the law as it exists now, as I have laid it down to you, then, whatever may be the consequences, and however little you may think the prosecution wise, or however little you may think the thing itself desirable, however little you may think any kind of publication should ever be made subject matter of attack, yet it is your duty to administer the law as you find it, not to strain it in Mr. Foote's favor because you think he ought not to be prosecuted, still less to strain it against the defendants because you may yourselves not agree with the sentiments which they advocate, as you certainly are not likely to agree with the manner in which they

advocate them. Take these libels into your consideration and say whether you find Mr. Foote or Mr. Ramsey Guilty or Not Guilty of the publication.

Mr. Maloney: Would your lordship give the jury the papers?

Lord Coleridge: I beg your pardon, there are some cartoons that are offensive. Mr. Foote's excuse is that they are not attacks upon, and not intended to be a caricature of almighty god. If there be such a being, says Mr. Foote, he can have no feeling for him but a profound reverence and awe, but this is his mode of holding up to contempt what he calls a caricature of that being as it appears in the Hebrew scriptures. That is for you to try. You must look at them and judge for yourselves whether they do or do not come within the law.

On the conclusion of the summing-up which occupied an hour and forty-five minutes, at twenty minutes past twelve o'clock the jury retired to consider their verdict, taking with them the incriminated publications.

Shortly before two o'clock, Lord Coleridge, who had received a communication from the jury, said: I have been informed that they are not able to agree to a verdict, and I ought to be at Westminster to meet the Lord Chancellor and the judges who are members of the Rule Committee. Indeed I ought to have been there at ten o'clock this morning, but I was anxious to dispose of this case. The jury inform me that there is no prospect of an agreement, but perhaps they have not been long enough in consultation to be able to say that it is impossible that they should come to an agreement. I have spoken to Mr. Serle, my associate, and I have mentioned an hour at which the jury, in the event of their not being able to agree, shall be discharged. What do you propose to do, Mr. Maloney if they should disagree?

Mr. Maloney: I should like, my lord, to consult with Sir Hardinge Giffard as to that, and let the case stand on the list.

Lord Coleridge: Is he in the building?

Mr. Maloney: Within the next quarter of an hour I will see him. My own desire is that the case should stand in the list for trial at the next sittings.

Lord Coleridge: Why at the next sittings? Why should I postpone it?

Mr. Maloney: I merely say that, my lord, for the convenience of all parties.

Mr. Avory: On behalf of the defendants my lord, I have to say that I do not desire it to be postponed, and would prefer if it is to be tried again, that it should be tried without further delay.

Lord Coleridge: I have already intimated that is my view. In case the jury disagree, Mr. Maloney, you must be ready with your answer to-morrow morning, as to what course you intend to pursue.

Mr. Maloney: In the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, your lordship allowed the jury to have the prints.

Lord Coleridge: They have got them.

Mr. Maloney: I beg your lordship's pardon, I was not aware of that.

Lord Coleridge: Supposing that there should be a verdict of Guilty, I would pass sentence to-morrow morning. Supposing there should be a verdict of Not Guilty, it is not necessary to consider the matter further. Supposing there is a disagreement, I shall want to know in the morning what the prosecution intend to do.

Mr. Maloney: I shall try to find out before half-an-hour what Sir Hardinge Giffard intends to do.

Lord Coleridge: I cannot stay; I ought to have been at Westminster at ten o'clock.

Mr. Avory: If there should be a verdict of Guilty, I should move for an arrest of judgment.

Lord Coleridge: That would be very improper.

Mr. Maloney: If there should be a verdict of Guilty and your lordship proposes to sentence to-morrow morning, I should be prepared on the part of the prosecution to say that they desire to have a lenient view taken of this particular case.

Lord Coleridge: If they are found guilty of it, the defendants must appear to-morrow morning before me. If you think it is in the interests of your clients to raise that then, you may do so.

Mr. Maloney: Very well, my lord.

Lord Coleridge then retired.

At three minutes past five the jury came into court, when, the Associate addressing them said:

Gentlemen of the jury, are you agreed?

The Foreman: No.

The Associate: Then gentlemen of the jury you are discharged, but I must ask you to attend on Saturday at half-past ten in case you are wanted.

THIRD DAY.

At the sitting of the Court this morning (Thursday), Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey, coming down again in the custody of

the Governor of Holloway Gaol, were present by the direction of his lordship given on the previous day, in the event of the jury disagreeing in their verdict. This, as will be seen from our report of yesterday's proceedings, they did, and they were then discharged.

On the Associate calling over the case of the Queen against Ramsey and Foote,

The Lord Chief Justice, addressing Sir Hardinge Giffard, said: Sir Hardinge, what course do you propose to take?

Sir Hardinge Giffard: My lord, if your lordship desires that this case should go on now, I am ready to go on now.

Lord Coleridge: Just as you please.

Mr. Foote: My lord, I respectfully beg your lordship's indulgence. I am not practically prepared to defend myself now. I didn't know how much prison diet and confinement had weakened me, until I had to make an effort for my defence the day before yesterday, and the Governor of the Gaol can inform your lordship how physically prostrated I was after it.

Lord Coleridge: I have just been informed, and I hardly knew it before, what such imprisonment as yours means, and what in the form it has been inflicted upon you it must mean; but now that I do know of it, I will take care that the proper authorities know of it also and I will see that you have proper support.

Mr. Foote: Thank you, my lord.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: Will next week suit your lordship to take this case? Of course I am quite in your lordship's hands.

Mr. Foote: Could your lordship take the case next Tuesday?

Lord Coleridge: Yes, I think I can if that will suit you. It is so entirely unusual to pursue a case in this way that I will do anything you wish.

Mr. Foote: Thank you, my lord. If your lordship would fix it for that day it would suit us.

Lord Coleridge: Very well.

Mr. Foote: If your lordship pleases——

Sir Hardinge Giffard: After your lordship gives that opinion, I should certainly feel it my duty to recommend my client to acquiesce in anything your lordship should suggest.

Lord Coleridge: It is extremely unusual when a conviction has been obtained upon substantially the same sort of thing to go on with another prosecution.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: Your lordship knows that this is another indictment.

Lord Coleridge: I am perfectly aware of that.

Sir H. Giffard: And that the indictment contains different libels.

Lord Coleridge: I am aware of that, too.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: The second indictment, your lordship will remember, was preferred against the defendants by the Corporation of the City of London.

Lord Coleridge: I am quite aware of that, and I am also aware that they were different subject matters. That is the reason I said the same sort of thing.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: This is the earliest in point of date.

Lord Coleridge: Yes, I know.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: I only want your lordship to have the facts before you. Anything your lordship suggests I will advise my client to accede to.

Lord Coleridge: I have acted upon one rule throughout the whole of this case. In any other case I might have said a great deal, but in this I decline to make the slightest suggestion of any kind or description. I must leave it entirely in the hands of the prosecution on their own responsibility. But as I have had information from the highest source—the Governor of the Gaol—that Mr. Foote is physically suffering from the prison discipline (the Governor of the Gaol cannot help it); but as Mr. Foote is physically suffering from it, I will certainly do all I can to put him in a physical position to defend himself, and I will take the defence whenever he pleases.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: After what your lordship has said I quite acquiesce in the adjournment until Tuesday, and in the meantime I will consult those who have instituted this prosecution, for what they believe to be right and proper purposes, and I will take their direction as to what shall be done, and then ask them to take into account the imprisonment of the defendants and the disagreement of the jury. I have no doubt all that will be fully considered by those for whom I act.

Lord Coleridge: As I said yesterday—and I don't say it satirically—the names of the parties who have instituted these proceedings are unknown to me, and of their motives and character I am absolutely ignorant.

Sir Hardinge Giffard: If it should be determined not to go on with this prosecution, probably it would be unnecessary that the defendants should be brought here again, because in that event notice would be given, and the bringing up of the defendants from the gaol be unnecessary?

Lord Coleridge: As you please about that At any rate, it can stand for the present, and the case be taken on Tuesday. Does that suit you?

Mr. Foote: Yes, my lord. As the trial in that case is a matter of contingency, I would ask your lordship to direct the Governor of the Gaol to allow us proper food in the interval.

Lord Coleridge: I believe I have no authority over the Governor of the Gaol. Let me do him the justice to say if it had not been for his communication, I should not have known that you were suffering from what he is obliged to do by law. He is a minister of the law.

Mr. Foote: Quite so, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: If there is any difficulty about it, I will take care that the Home Secretary or the Prison Inspectors, or whoever are the proper authorities, shall know of this, if there is any difficulty in the way.

Mr. Foote: Thank you, my lord. I am quite content to leave it there.

Lord Coleridge (addressing the Governor of the Gaol) said: You will understand that the same facilities are to be continued to Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey for preparing their defence, as I ordered before.

The defendants then left the court in custody, after shaking hands with numerous friends who crowded round.

It is only fair to the Governor of Holloway Gaol to say that owing to his kindness, Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey appeared in court in their ordinary dress instead of the prison garb.

APPLICATION FOR A *NOLLE PROSEQUI* TO BE ENTERED.

[*Before the* LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, *on Saturday, April 28th.*]

Mr. Maloney said: Will your lordship allow me to mention the case of the Queen *v.* Foote and Ramsey? What occurred on Wednesday was communicated to the prosecutor, and he has accordingly informed those who act for him—Sir H. Giffard and myself—to state to your lordship that it is his desire that a *nolle prosequi* should be entered as regards the defendants Foote and Ramsey.

Lord Coleridge: I cannot do that; it is for the Attorney-General to do it.

Mr. Maloney: It is our intention to apply to the Attorney-General for his permission.

Lord Coleridge: The Attorney-General must do it for himself.

Mr. Maloney: The prosecution will apply to him to enter a *nolle prosequi*, and whatever steps may be necessary for that end will be taken.

Lord Coleridge: You must not assume that he will do it. As I have always understood when the Attorney-General does this, he takes upon himself a certain responsibility. I did it myself once or twice when I was Attorney-General. It is the prerogative of the Attorney-General.

Mr. Maloney: I have made some inquiry at the Crown Office about it.

Lord Coleridge: No doubt it can be done. The Attorney-General can do it if he likes, but you must not assume in a case of this kind that he will release you from the responsibility of going on, or not going on. That is what I mean.

Mr. Maloney: It is intended to make application to the Attorney-General.

Lord Coleridge: I am much obliged to you for telling me this, but I can make no order upon it; therefore the matter must stand until Tuesday. It is impossible to say what the Attorney-General may say as to this. I may say it is not a case in which on behalf of the Crown I will interfere; the

prosecutor must act upon his own responsibility. He can either go on or not, just as he pleases.

Mr. Maloney: If the prosecutor is willing not to go on, I suppose it is optional with him?

Lord Coleridge: I say nothing about it except this; that you put upon the Attorney-General a personal responsibility which he may be willing to accept or not; but that is entirely for him to say.

Mr. Maloney: My instructions are, that the prosecutor wished whatever steps might be necessary to be taken for the withdrawal of the prosecution, should be taken.

Lord Coleridge: That is another matter, if he is willing to appear on Tuesday and offer no evidence.

Mr. Maloney: I think some difficulty might arise out of that, because it might lead to the supposition that the papers charged in the indictment were not blasphemous, and lead to their being re-published again.

Lord Coleridge: I only point out that when you tell me that you assume on the part of a great public functionary that he will take the responsibility, it is by no means certain that he will accept it. If he likes to take it, by all means let it be so; but I only point out to you that you must not assume he will do it as a matter of course, and so relieve you from a responsibility which at present lies upon you. That is all I mean—he may not take the responsibility.

Mr. Maloney: I thought it right that I should mention it to your lordship at the earliest possible moment.

Lord Coleridge: You are quite right to do so; the case must stand in the paper for Tuesday morning.

Mr. Maloney: Very well, my lord.

ABANDONMENT OF THE PROSECUTION.

In the Court of Queen's Bench on Tuesday, May 1st, before Lord Coleridge, the Lord Chief Justice of England, on the case of the Queen *v.* Ramsey and Foote being called,

Mr. Maloney (in the absence of his leader, Sir Hardinge Giffard, Q.C.,) said: After mentioning this case to your lordship on Saturday a petition was drawn up and lodged with the Attorney-General yesterday morning, for a *nolle prosequi* on behalf of the prosecutor, and this very instant the Attorney-General's clerk has handed in his fiat granting a *nolle prosequi.*

Lord Chief Justice: Very well; you must let me see it, please.

Mr. Maloney (handing the fiat to the Lord Chief Justice): Your lordship sees the petition.

Lord Coleridge (after reading the fiat) said: I have said not a word about this being unadvisable, not one single syllable. The statement in this petition is absolutely inaccurate. That I have intimated in the slightest manner whether it was advisable, or the contrary, is absolutely untrue. I took particular care to leave the responsibility with the prosecutor, and I have intimated not a word as to whether it was advisable or not to go on. I find the petitioner states that I thought it was unadvisable to proceed. I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. Maloney: I don't remember, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: I took particular care not to say anything at all, one way or the other.

Mr. Maloney: Will your lordship allow me to read the words?

Lord Coleridge: Do you mean to say the word "unadvisable" is not there? If it is not you may contradict me.

Mr. Maloney: No, my lord, I don't mean to say that.

Lord Coleridge: Then I don't understand your application. I take exception to one word, which is utterly inaccurate. If that word is not there, contradict me in what I say. I have nothing further to do of course, if the Attorney-General has entered a *nolle prosequi.* I cannot have anything further to do. I don't know exactly what is done in these

cases. I shall, of course, not think of going on with the case. After the Attorney-General has entered a *nolle prosequi* there is an end to the case as far as I am concerned. Something, however, must be done.

Mr. Maloney: The usual course, my lord, is for the Queen's Coroner to draw up a *nolle prosequi*, and to enter it upon the record. That is as I understand the practice. That fiat is the Attorney-General's authority to the Crown to act, and it is lodged at the Crown Office.

Lord Coleridge: The Crown Office doesn't open until eleven, and, technically speaking, I cannot proceed for ten minutes, (it was ten minutes to eleven). Of course, under these circumstances, I should not think of proceeding. You will undertake to see that this is done now, Mr. Maloney?

Mr. Maloney: Yes, my lord.

Lord Coleridge: Under those circumstances I have nothing further to do than to call the next case.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are reprinted, with some alterations and additions, from the columns of the *Freethinker*. They are neither methodical nor exhaustive. I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Bradlaugh more or less intimately for twenty years. I have worked with him in the Freethought movement and stood by his side on many political platforms. It seemed to me, therefore, that if I jotted down, even in a disjointed manner, some of my recollections of his great personality, I should be easing my own mind and conferring a pleasure on many readers. Beyond that I was not ambitious. The time for writing Mr. Bradlaugh's life is not yet, but when it arrives my jottings may furnish a point or two to his biographer.

G. W. FOOTE.

March 30, 1891.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh.

WHEN I came to London, in January, 1868, I was eighteen years of age. I had plenty of health and very little religion. While in my native town of Plymouth I had read and thought for myself, and had gradually passed through various stages of scepticism, until I was dissatisfied even with the advanced Unitarianism of a preacher like the Rev. J. K. Applebee. But I could not find any literature in advance of his position, and there was no one of whom I could inquire. Secularism and Atheism I had never heard of in any definite way, although I remember, when a little boy, having an Atheist pointed out to me in the street. Naturally I regarded him as a terrible monster. I did not know what Atheism was except in a very vague way; but I inferred from the tones, expressions, and gestures of those who pointed him out to me, that an Atheist was a devil in human form.

Soon after I came to London I found out an old school-fellow, and went to lodge with his family. They were tainted with Atheism, and my once pious playmate was as corrupt as the rest of them. They took me one Sunday evening to Cleveland Hall, where I heard Mrs. Law knock the Bible about delightfully. She was not what would be called a woman of culture, but she had what some devotees of "culchaw" do not possess—a great deal of natural ability; and she appeared to know the "blessed book" from cover to

cover. Her discourse was very different from the Unitarian sermons I had heard at Plymouth. She spoke in a plain, honest, straightforward manner, and I resolved to visit Cleveland Hall again.

Three or four weeks afterwards I heard Mr. Bradlaugh for the first time. It was a very wet Sunday evening, but as 'bus-riding was dearer then than it is now, and my resources were slender, I walked about three miles through the heavy rain, and sat on a backless bench in Cleveland Hall, for which I think I paid twopence. I was wet through, but I was young, and my health was flawless. Nor did I mind the discomfort a bit when Mr. Bradlaugh began his lecture. Fiery natural eloquence of that sort was a novelty in my experience. I kept myself warm with applauding, and at the finish I was pretty nearly as dry outside as inside. From that time I went to hear Mr. Bradlaugh whenever I had an opportunity. He became the "god" of my young idolatry. I used to think of him charging the hosts of superstition, and wish I could be near him in the fight. But it was rather a dream than any serious expectation of such an honor.

When the new Hall of Science was opened I became a pretty regular attendant. I heard Mr. Charles Watts, who was then as now a capital debater; Mr. G. J. Holyoake, Mr. C. C. Cattell, Mr. Austin Holyoake, and perhaps one or two other lecturers whom I have forgotten. Mr. Austin Holyoake frequently took the chair, especially at Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures, and a capital chairman he was, giving out the notices in a pleasant, graceful manner, and pleading for financial support like a true man. He was working hard for the success of the enterprise himself, and had a right to beg help from others.

Mr. Bradlaugh, however, was the great attraction in my case. Perhaps I was more impressionable at

that time, but I fancy he was then at his best as an orator. In later life he grew more cautious under a sense of responsibility; he had to think what he should not say as well as what he should. He cultivated the art of persuasion, and he was right in doing so. But at the earlier period I am writing of he gave a full swing to his passionate eloquence. His perorations were marvellously glowing and used to thrill me to the very marrow.

Gradually I began to make acquaintances at the Hall. I got to know Mr. Austin Holyoake and his charming wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bayston, Mr. Herbert Gilham, Mr. R. O. Smith, and other workers. By and bye I was introduced to Mr. Bradlaugh and shook hands with him. It was the proudest moment of my young life. I still remember his scrutinising look. It was keen but kindly, and the final expression seemed to say, "We may see more of each other."

In 1870 I wrote my first article in the *National Reformer*. For a year or two I wrote occasionally, and after that with tolerable frequency. I was also engaged in various efforts at the Hall; helping to carry on a Secular Sunday School, a Young Men's Secular Association, etc. Naturally I was drawn more and more into Mr. Bradlaugh's acquaintance, and when he found himself unable to continue the Logic Class he had started at the Hall he asked me to carry it on for him. Of course I was proud of the invitation. But the Class did not live long. It was not Logic, but Mr. Bradlaugh, that had brought the members together. Nor do I think they would have learnt much of the art from Mr. Bradlaugh, except in an empirical way. He had a very logical cast of mind, but as far as I could see he had little acquaintance with formal Logic as it is taught by Mill and Whately, whom I select as typical masters of Induction and Deduction,

without wishing to depreciate the host of other authorities. Mr. Bradlaugh really gave his class lessons in Metaphysics; his talk was of substance, mode, and attribute, rather than of premises and conclusions.

Mr. Bradlaugh and I were brought into closer acquaintance by the Republican agitation in England after the proclamation of the present French Republic. I attended the Republican Conference at Birmingham in 1871, when I first met my old friend Dr. Guest of Manchester, Mr. R. A. Cooper of Norwich, Mr. Daniel Baker, Mr. Ferguson the Glasgow Home Ruler, and other veterans of reform. We held our Conference on Sunday in the old meeting-place of the Secular Society, which was approached by very abrupt steps, and being situated over stables, was not devoid of flavor. On Monday the Conference was continued in one of the rooms under the Town Hall. A long political programme was concocted. I was elected Secretary, and had the honor of speaking at the public meeting in the large hall. It was my first appearance in such a perilous position. I was apprehensive, and I said so. But Mr. Bradlaugh put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to fear. His kind looks and words were an excellent tonic. When I rose to speak I thought next to nothing about the audience. I thought "Mr. Bradlaugh is listening, I must do my best." And now as I am writing, I recall his encouraging glance as I looked at him, and the applause he led when I made my first point. He was my leader, and he helped me in an elder-brotherly way. Nothing could exceed his considerate generosity. Other people did not see it, but I remember it, and it was typical of the man.

One incident at the Conference is worth noting. It occurred in the afternoon, when Mr. R. A. Cooper (I think) was in the chair. The question of Free Educa-

tion was being discussed. Mr. Bradlaugh did not quite like it, nor did I. He asked me to go with him into an ante-room and consider an amendment. What it was I can hardly remember, although I recollect that Mr. Cooper was very sarcastic about it. Since then my own opinion has changed, as I dare say Mr. Bradlaugh's had changed; and the incident would not be worth recalling if it did not throw a light upon Mr. Bradlaugh's philosophy. He was always in favor of self-help and individual responsibility, and he was naturally hostile to everything that might weaken those precious elements of English life.

During the years immediately after the opening of the Hall of Science, Mr. Bradlaugh was there a good deal. Sometimes he attended the week-night entertainments and gave a reading from Shelley or Whittier or some other poet. The audience applauded as a matter of course. They always applauded Mr. Bradlaugh. But he was no reader. He delivered his lines with that straightforward sincerity which characterised his speeches. He cultivated none of the graces or dexterities of the elocutionist. Besides, he was too original to be a successful echo of other men. I think he only did justice to Shelley's lines "To the Men of England." But this is a piece of simple and vigorous declamation; very fine, no doubt, but rather rhetoric than poetry.

Mr. Bradlaugh was anything but a cold man. I should say he was electric. But his tastes, so far as I could discover, did not lie in the direction of poetry. Certainly I heard him once, in those old days, read a great part, if not the whole of Shelley's "Sensitive Plant." He loved Shelley, however, as an Atheist and a Republican, and I suppose he took Shelley's poetry on trust. But I do not think, though I speak under correction, that he cared very much for poetry

as such. I could never discover from his conversation or writings that he had read a line of Shakespeare—the god of Colonel Ingersoll. His mind was of the practical order, like Oliver Cromwell's. He had a genius for public affairs. He was not only a born orator, but a born ruler of men. Naturally he had, as the French say, the defects of his qualities. And it may be that the terrible stress of his life tended to repress the poetical side of his nature, and less developed his subtlety than his strength. Yet his feelings were deep, and his heart was easily touched. When William O'Brien delivered that great speech in the House of Commons after his imprisonment by Mr. Balfour, with all its needless indignities, there were two men who could not restrain their tears. One was an Irish member. The other was Charles Bradlaugh. One who witnessed the scene told me it was infinitely pathetic to see that gigantic man, deemed so hard by an ignorant world, wiping away his tears at the tale of a brave man's unmerited suffering.

Mr. Bradlaugh used to attend the social parties pretty often in those old days. He did not dance and he stood about rather awkwardly. It must have been a great affliction, but he bore it with exemplary fortitude. Once or twice I saw Mrs. Bradlaugh there. She had a full-blown matronly figure. Miss Alice and Miss Hypatia came frequently. They were not then living in the enervating air of London, and they looked extremely robust. I also remember the boy Charles, of whom Mr. Bradlaugh seemed very proud. He was a remarkably bright lad, and full of promise. But he was carried off by a fever. Only a day or two after the lad's death Mr. Bradlaugh had to lecture at the Hall. I was away, and I wondered whether he would fulfil the engagement. He did fulfil it. A

friend wrote to me that Mr. Bradlaugh walked through the hall and mounted the platform with a face as white and rigid as that of a statue. He made no reference or allusion to his loss, but all could see he carried a bleeding heart. His lecturing in such circumstances was characteristic. Weaker men would have indulged their grief; he was made of sterner stuff, and would not let it interfere with what he deemed his duty.

Splendid as was his eloquence at that time, Mr. Bradlaugh did not draw the large audiences that flocked around him a few years later. The Hall of Science was at first but half its present size, the platform standing on the right as you entered, with a small gallery on the opposite side. Its holding capacity could not have been more than half what it is at present, yet I have seen the place far from full. But the audiences grew larger and larger, and eventually the hall was increased to its present proportions, although for a long time there was not cash enough to put on a proper roof, and the building was defaced by a huge unsightly beam, on each side of which there was an arch of corrugated iron.

Those were glorious times. Difficulties were great, but there was a spirit at the Hall that laughed at them. How the foremost men about the place did work! Mr. R. O. Smith and Mr. Trevilion, senior, could a tale unfold. Whenever Freethinkers are at all dejected they should have a chat with one of those gentleman. Perhaps it would make them ashamed of their dejection, and fill them with the spirit of the heroic days.

Friends have told me with what energy Mr. Bradlaugh fought the battles of the old Reform League. I *know* with what energy he threw himself into the Republican agitation that followed the downfall of

Napoleon III. He tried to get to Paris but failed. Jules Favre and his friends did not want him. Favre himself was an eloquent histrion, and no doubt he felt afraid of a man like Mr. Bradlaugh. But if Mr. Bradlaugh could not get to Paris he fought hard for France in London. Meetings at the Hall of Science did not suffice. There was money from French sources and St. James's Hall was taken for a big demonstration. The Positivists shared in the proceedings. Their chief man was Mr. Frederic Harrison. Mr. Bradlaugh and he were a tremendous contrast. In fact a London paper (I think the *Echo*) remarked that Mr. Bradlaugh spoke as well as Mr. Harrison wrote, and Mr. Harrison spoke as badly as Mr. Bradlaugh wrote. There was some truth in this, though like most epigrams it was not all true. Mr. Bradlaugh was a born orator, but not a born writer. Yet he often wrote with a forthright power, naked and unadorned, which could dispense with the aid of literary artifices.

During this English agitation on behalf of France, held firmly under German feet, Mr. Bradlaugh came into contact with a French countess, who, I believe, either supplied or was the channel of supplying the necessary funds. As the lady is mentioned in Mr Headingley's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, which was published with Mr. Bradlaugh's sanction, there is no reason why I should not refer to her. She came several times to the Hall of Science, and I was introduced to her. She had been a beauty, and although time was beginning to tell on her, she retained a good deal of charm and distinction, which, like a true Frenchwoman, she heightened by the art of dressing. Then as now, of course, foul tongues wagged in foolish heads, and Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies were not slow to point to the French countess with prurient grimaces. Unable to understand friendship between man and

woman, owing to their Puritan training or incurable rankness, they invited the orthodox in religion and politics to note this suspicious connection. Something of this malicious folly must have reached Mr. Bradlaugh's ears, but I imagine he was too proud and self-contained to let it disturb him.

After the Birmingham meeting, and the founding of the Republican League, of which Mr. Bradlaugh became president, and I secretary, he visited Spain on private business, taking with him a message from the Conference to Senor Castelar, the leading spirit of the short-lived Spanish Republic. I remember writing out the message in a clear, bold hand, and addressing the foolscap envelope in the same way. When Mr. Bradlaugh fell among the Carlists he cursed my caligraphy. Happily, however, the officer who scrutinised that envelope could not read at all, and Mr. Bradlaugh escaped the consequences of being known to carry about letters addressed to the devilish Castelar.

During Mr. Bradlaugh's first visit to America I was a frequent contributor to his journal, and I corresponded with him privately. I went down to Northampton and delivered a lecture at his request, under the auspices of his electoral committee. The old theatre—a dirty, ramshackle place as I recollect it—was crowded, and I had my first taste of the popularity of Mr. Bradlaugh in the borough. Every mention of his name excited the wildest enthusiasm.

While Mr. Bradlaugh was lecturing in the States a general election took place in England. It was impossible for him to return in time, but his friends looked after his interests. A committee was formed at the Hall of Science to raise the necessary funds, and Mr. Charles Watts and I went down to Northampton to conduct the election. We addressed outdoor meetings in the day, and crowded indoor meetings at night.

Again I saw what a hold Mr. Bradlaugh had on his Northampton followers. They sang "Bradlaugh for Northampton" in the Circus with all the fervor of Scotch Covenanters on their hillsides "rolling the psalm to wintry skies."

Mr. Watts and I did not win the seat for Mr. Bradlaugh, nor did he win it himself at the next election, but we managed to increase his vote, and he expressed his pleasure at the result.

Soon after the election Mr. Bradlaugh returned to England. Mr. Watts and I went down with him to Northampton. There was a crowded public meeting, I believe in the Circus; and I saw Mr. Bradlaugh, for the first time, in the presence of his future constituents. They were simply intoxicated with excitement. The shouts of "Bradlaugh" and "Charley" were deafening. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved in the air. The multitude rose to its feet and gave its hero a splendid welcome. Then we settled down to speech-making, but all that followed was somewhat tame and flat after that first glorious outburst of popular devotion.

The next election came quickly. It resulted in the return of a Tory majority for Benjamin Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone went off to sulk in his tent. Two Tories were returned for Radical Northampton. Mr. Bradlaugh let them in. He was determined to have one of the Northampton seats. To get it he had to make himself inevitable. He had to prove that if Northampton wanted two Liberal members, one of them must be Charles Bradlaugh. It took him thirteen years to demonstrate this, but he succeeded, as he succeeded in most things. At last, in 1880, he ran as official Liberal candidate with Mr. Labouchere, and both were returned.

I assisted Mr. Bradlaugh during his second (1874)

election. It was then that I first saw Mrs. Besant. She had not yet taken to the platform, but she was writing for the *National Reformer*, and her pen was active during the contest. Mr. Watts was also there. Another figure I remember was Mr. George Odger, who labored among the Trade Unionists of Northampton in Mr. Bradlaugh's interest. George Odger was one of the ablest of all the working-class leaders I have ever met. He came from my own county, Devonshire, being born at Horrabridge, on the road between Plymouth and Tavistock. He was honest to the heart's core, as well as very able, but he was incurably indolent. You never could be sure of him at a public meeting. He had to be looked up beforehand, or he might forget the engagement and spend his time more agreeably. He was passionately fond of the theatre, and could talk by the hour on famous performances of old actors and actresses. During the daytime at Northampton I had long chats with him. He objected to fine hotels, and he objected to walking; so I had to sit with him in the garden of a semi-rural public-house, where our conversation was altogether out of proportion to our liquor. Odger liked beer; not much of it, but just enough; it suited his palate and his purse; and as I drank next to nothing, the landlord must have thought us unprofitable customers.

Mr. Bradlaugh had rooms at the George Hotel. It was the Tory house, but he preferred it, and Mrs. Besant, Mr. Watts, and the rest of us, fed and slept there during the election. This gave rise to a good deal of silly talk among Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies. One evening we were returning from a Town Hall meeting, and the Tories had been holding a small meeting at the "George." As we reached the foot of the stairs, we encountered a knot of Tories. One of them was Mr. Merewether, the Tory candidate. He

was nearly of the same height as Mr. Bradlaugh, and well built. His friends were holding him back, but he broke from them, exclaiming, "Hang it! I *will* have a look at him." He stood at the very foot of the staircase and looked hard at Mr. Bradlaugh ascending. His expression was one of good-tempered insolence. After a long look at Mr. Bradlaugh, he returned to his friends, shouting, "Well, I'm damned if he's as bad-looking as I thought."

I left Northampton before the close of the poll. Mr. Bradlaugh was leaving the same night for America, having barely time to catch the boat at Liverpool. I drove round with him before leaving, on a visit to some of the polling stations. He had paid me a modest sum for my services, but he found he had hardly enough to take him across the Atlantic, and he asked me to lend him what money I had. I fished seven or nine pounds out of my pocket—I forget which—and handed it to him. It was paid back to me by his order a few weeks subsequently; and the incident would not be worth mentioning if it did not throw a light on the libellous nonsense of Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies that he was rolling in wealth.

While at Northampton with Mr. Bradlaugh, and on other occasions, I saw something of his personal tastes and habits. He struck me as an abstemious man. He was far from a great eater, and I never noticed him drink anything at dinner but claret, which is not an intoxicating beverage. On the whole, I should say, it is less injurious to the stomach and brain than tea or coffee. He was rather fond of a cup of tea seventeen years ago, and latterly his fondness for it developed into something like a passion. More than once I found him at St. John's Wood drinking a big cup of pretty strong tea, and was seduced by his genial invitation into joining him in that reckless indulgence.

He used to smoke too in the old days, but he afterwards gave up the practice for several years. About seven years ago, however, he resumed it. I do not think he ever attained to the dignity of a pipe. He smoked cigars. Some time in April, 1889, I spent an hour with him at the House of Commons. He got the Speaker's leave to take me into the lower smoke-room, and we "discussed" a cigar and some claret while discussing some Freethought business. The claret he seemed indifferent to, but he puffed the cigar with an air of enjoyment.

During the Northampton election times I used to take a good stiff daily walk. All through my youth I had plenty of exercise in the open air, and I still grow desperately fusty without a brisk tramp at least once in the twenty-four hours. Mr. Bradlaugh generally took a drive, and I remember telling him with youthful audacity that he ought to walk for his health's sake. Of course it was difficult for him to walk in the streets. His stature and bulk made him too noticeable, and mobbing was very unpleasant. But he might have driven out of town and trudged a mile or two on the country roads. My opinion is that his neglect of physical exercise helped to shorten his life. Occasional bouts of fishing were very well in their way, but *daily* exercise is the necessary thing. I do not forget the tremendous labor, physical as well as mental, of lecturing on burning questions to large audiences. All that, however, goes on in hot, crowded rooms, full of vitiated air; and it gives no proper exercise to the legs and loins or the lower vital organs.

After one of my remonstrances Mr. Bradlaugh invited me to play a game of billiards. It was the only time I ever played with him. His style with the cue was spacious and splendid. The balls went flying about the board, and I chaffed him on his flukes. He

had not the temperament of a billiard-player. Still, I have heard that he played a fair game at St. Stephen's; but I can hardly believe it without first-hand testimony. I am willing to believe, however, that he was a good chess-player. Certainly he had a head for it. But chess is a vile game for a brain-worker, whose recreations should never involve a mental strain.

When I first knew Mr. Bradlaugh he was living at Tottenham. I never visited him there, but I often called on him at his later lodgings in Turner-street, Commercial-road. He occupied the ground floor, consisting of two rooms. The back was his bedroom, and the front his library and workshop. It was what the Americans call a one-horse affair. Shelves all round the room were filled with books. Mr. Bradlaugh sat at a desk with his back to the fireplace. On his right was the door communicating with his bedroom, facing him the door opening on the passage, and on his right the street window. The room itself could hardly have been more than twelve or thirteen feet square. I once told him he was too near the fireplace, and he said it was sometimes good to have the poker handy. At that I stared, and he told me the following story.

One day a gentleman called on him and was invited to take a chair. He sat down facing Mr. Bradlaugh, and explained that he wanted advice on a very particular matter. God Almighty had told him to kill someone, and he had a difficulty in selecting a victim. Mr. Bradlaugh put his hand behind him and quietly grasped the poker. The inspired gentleman put the problem as a knotty one, and begged the assistance of the clever Iconoclast. "Well," said Mr. Bradlaugh, keeping quite cool, "what do you say to the Archbishop of Canterbury?" "The very man!" exclaimed the inspired gentleman. He got Mr. Bradlaugh to

give him the Archbishop's address, and said, "Good-day," with a profusion of thanks. Mr. Bradlaugh went to the door to look for a policeman, but none was visible, and the inspired gentleman was soon out of sight.

"So you see," said Mr. Bradlaugh, "It's good to have the poker handy. I never saw or heard of the man again, and I knew he couldn't get near the Archbishop. There are too many flunkeys in the way."

Those were my struggling days, and Mr. Bradlaugh was very kind to me. I remember the Sunday evening when I told him I thought of taking to the Freethought platform. He pointed out the hard and thorny path I should have to tread, but when he saw I was resolved on the attempt, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "There is no young man in the movement I would sooner welcome."

In the very same room, on another Sunday evening a little later, I first saw James Thomson. He came down to the Hall of Science with Mr. Bradlaugh, in whose employment he then was, and I gave him the article I had brought for the *National Reformer*. He shook hands very cordially, and I was delighted to meet one for whose poetry I had a profound admiration.

It was also at the Hall of Science, about the same time, that I met the eccentric Mr. Turberville, brother to Mr. Blackmore, the novelist. He was a man of parts with a bee in his bonnet. He claimed kinship with Turberville, a minor poet of the sixteenth century, and he loved to talk of poetry. His knowledge of Shakespeare was profound and minute. He admired Mr. Bradlaugh's perorations immensely, as well as his bold defence of Freethought. He made out a will in Mr. Bradlaugh's favor, but he subsequently made another will, and died in circumstances that necessitated an inquest. By agreement, however,

Mr. Bradlaugh obtained £2,500 from the estate, and the windfall came opportunely, for his struggles and litigations had involved him in considerable debt. I know he often had to borrow money on heavy interest. One day, at Turner-street, he told me that a creditor of this species had coolly invited him to dinner. "Hang it," he said, "you can't dine with a man who charges you sixty per cent."

Another recollection I have of Mr. Bradlaugh is in connexion with the funeral of Mr. Austin Holyoake. The death of this gentleman was a great loss to the Freethought cause. He was highly respected by all who knew him. The geniality of his disposition was such that he had many friends and not a single enemy. For some years he was Mr. Bradlaugh's printer and publisher, and a frequent contributor to his journal. He was foremost in every good work, but he was one of those modest men who never get the credit of their labors. He died at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, in an upstairs room above the printing office, where his devoted wife had for many weeks nursed his flickering life. The funeral was a notable event. Those of us who could afford it rode in the undertaker's coaches, and the rest walked in procession to Highgate Cemetery. I can still see Mr. Bradlaugh in my mind's eye, bustling about on the ground floor, taking everything as usual on his own shoulders. He sorted us in fours for the coaches, my *vis à vis* being James Thomson. At the grave-side, after the reading of Austin Holyoake's own funeral service by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Bradlaugh delivered a brief address which he had written for the occasion. On the whole it was too much a composition, but one sentence was true "Bradlaugh," and it sounds in my ears still:—"Twenty years of friendship lie buried in that grave."

How such scenes are impressed on one's memory! As I write I see the set face of Charles Bradlaugh. I behold the sob-shaken back and bowed head of Herbert Gilham just in front of me. I hear and feel the cool, rustling wind, like a plaintive requiem over the dead.

Once again, years afterwards, I saw Mr. Bradlaugh in the same cemetery, supporting the helpless figure of Mrs. Ernestine Rose as she left the open grave of the dear partner of her long life of labor for the cause of human redemption.

Owing to circumstances, into which I need not enter, I saw little of Mr. Bradlaugh between 1875 and 1880. When he was returned for Northampton I rejoiced, and when he was committed to the Clock Tower I saw my duty sun-clear. It was to participate as I could, and might, in the struggle. My contributions to Mr. Bradlaugh's journal were resumed, and I spoke at meetings in his behalf. In May, 1881, I started the *Freethinker*, my oldest living child. Mr. Bradlaugh acted with his natural generosity. He advertised my bantling gratuitously in his own journal, and gave it every possible facility. This was not known at the time, but I ought to state it now.

Throughout that long, terrible struggle with the House of Commons I was with Mr. Bradlaugh on every point. If he made a single mistake I have yet to see it indicated. My article in the first number of the *Freethinker* was entitled "Mr. Bradlaugh's Advisers." Its object was to show the absurdity of the plentiful advice offered him, and the absolute justice of the course he was pursuing.

Three weeks afterwards the bigots convened a ticket meeting at Exeter Hall. The chief promoters were Earl Percy, Sir Bartle Frere, and butcher Varley. Mr. Bradlaugh was afraid the meeting would have a pre-

judicial effect on public opinion in the provinces. The fact of the *tickets* would be kept back, and the report would go forth that a vote was unanimously passed against him at a big London demonstration. It was necessary, therefore, that the meeting should be *spoiled.* And it *was.* Mr. Bradlaugh gave me the task of moving an amendment. We had a chat in his library at St. John's Wood, and as we parted he said, "I rely on you, Foote." He looked at me steadily, holding my eyes as though to read the depths.

We got tickets somehow. But the Protestant Alliance smelt mischief, and Mr. Bradlaugh's supporters had to fight their way in. Two hundred and fifty police were not enough to keep them all out. I was naturally a marked man, and fighting had to be supplemented by diplomacy. When the noble Smithson (Earl Percy), had drivelled for a few minutes as chairman, and the resolution against Mr. Bradlaugh had been proposed and seconded by Sir John Kennaway and Canon Taylor, I rose to move an amendment. But the amendment was refused. The resolution was put, and the Christians stood up and voted, while the organ played "God Save the Queen." Then, at a signal, our people jumped on the forms, and rent the air with cheers for "Bradlaugh." At another signal they all trooped out, went off to Trafalgar-square with the big crowd outside, and passed resolutions in Mr. Bradlaugh's favor. The bigots' meeting was completely spoiled. They had to barricade the doors and keep out their own people as well as the enemy; the hall was never half full, and their resolution was passed after refusing an amendment, amidst loud execrations. Such a lesson was taught the bigots that they never made another attempt. Mr. Bradlaugh had trusty lieutenants and stern supporters, and the bigots knew he would spoil every *private* meeting that pro-

fessed to be *public*. He acted with wisdom and determination, and the result showed he knew the stake he was playing for when he said, "I rely on you," with that steady Napoleonic look.

. . . . . .

Mr. Bradlaugh's legal exploits, if properly recorded, would fill a good-sized volume. When his life is adequately written, as it will be some day, this department will have to be entrusted to a skilled lawyer. No other person could do anything like justice to a most important part of the career of one whom the Tories used to call "that litigious man," when they were trying to ruin him in the law courts and he was only defending himself against their base attacks.

Those who had only known Mr. Bradlaugh as a platform orator had some difficulty in recognising him when they first met him in one of our "halls of justice." His whole manner was changed. He was polite, insinuating, and deferential. His attitude towards the judges was admirably calculated to conciliate their favor. I do not mean that *he* calculated. He had quite a superstitious veneration for judges. It was perfectly sincere and it never wavered. He would not hear a word against them. When he pleaded before them his personal sentiments ran in a line with his best interests; for although judges are above most temptations, their vanity is often sensitive, and Mr. Bradlaugh's manner was intensely flattering.

Had he followed the legal profession, Mr. Bradlaugh would have easily mounted to the top and earned a tremendous income. I have heard some of the cleverest counsel of our time, but I never heard one to be compared with him in grasp, subtlety and agility. He could examine and cross-examine with consummate dexterity. In arguing points of law he had the tenacity of a bull-dog and the keenness of a sleuth-hound. He

always fortified himself with a plethora of "cases." The table in front of him groaned with a weight of law. Here as elsewhere he was "thorough." An eminent jurisprudist once remarked to me, "there is little gleaning to be done after Bradlaugh."

As a pleader before juries, however, I doubt whether he would have achieved a great success. He was too much of a born orator. He began well, but he soon forgot the limited audience of twelve, and spoke to a wider circle. This is not the way to humor juries. They like to feel their own importance, and he succeeds best who plays upon their weakness. "Remember," their looks say, "you are talking to *us;* the other gentlemen listen accidentally; *we* make you or damn you."

My first recollection of Mr. Bradlaugh in the law courts is twenty-two years old. How many survivors are there of the friends who filled that dingy old court at Westminster where he argued before a full bench of judges in 1869? He was prosecuted for not giving sureties in the sum of £400 against the appearance of blasphemy or sedition in his paper. The law was resuscitated in his single case to crush him; but he fought, as he said he would, to the bitter end, and the Gladstone Government was glad to repeal the obsolete enactments. The Crown retired from the suit with a *stet processus*, and Mr. Bradlaugh was left with the laurels—and his costs.

I obtained an hour or two's leave from my employment, and heard a portion of Mr. Bradlaugh's argument It gave me a new conception of his powers. That is the only impression I retain. The details have dropped out of my memory, but there remains as fresh as ever the masterful figure of Charles Bradlaugh.

The best view I ever had of Mr. Bradlaugh in litigation was in the old Court of Queen's Bench on

Tuesday and Wednesday, July 19 and 20, 1881, when he cross-examined poor Mr. Newdegate. For a good deal of the time I sat beside him, and could watch *him* closely as well as the case. By raising the point whether the writ against him for penalties had been issued before or after he gave his vote in the House, he was able to put all the parties to the prosecution into the witness-box and make them give an account of themselves. Mr. Newdegate was one of the victims, and the poor man made confessions that furnished Mr. Bradlaugh with ground for a successful action against him under the law of Maintenance.

Mr. Newdegate was a hard-mouthed witness, but he was saddled, bridled, and ridden to the winning-post. His lips opened literally, making his mouth like the slit of a pillar-box. Getting evidence from him was like extracting a rotten cork from the neck of a bottle, but it all came out bit by bit, and the poor man must have left the witness-box feeling that he had delivered himself into the hands of that uncircumcised Philistine. His cross-examination lasted three hours. It was like flaying alive. Once or twice I felt qualms of pity for the old man, he was such an abject figure in the hands of that terrible antagonist. Every card he held had to be displayed. Finally he had to produce the bond of indemnity he had given the common informer Clarke against all the expenses he might incur in the suit. When this came out Mr. Bradlaugh bent down to me and said, "I have him." And he *did* have him. Despite the common notion that the old law of Maintenance was obsolete, Mr. Bradlaugh pursued him under it triumphantly, and instead of ruining "Bradlaugh," poor Newdegate was nearly ruined himself.

What a contrast to Mr. Newdegate was Mr. Bradlaugh! He was the very picture of suppressed fire, of rampant energies held in leash: the nerves of the face playing

like the ripple on water, the whole frame quivering, and the eyes ablaze. It was wonderful how he managed to keep his intellect alert and his judgment steady. Six hours of such work as he had in court that day were enough to tax the greatest strength. Before it was over I saw bodeful blood-rims under his eyes. It did not surprise me, on meeting him at the Cobden Workmen's Club the next evening, to learn that he had been frightfully ill. "Mr. Bradlaugh," I wrote at the time, "is a wonderfully strong man, but the Tories and the bigots are doing their best to kill him, and if this sort of thing is to continue very much longer they may succeed." Alas, they *did* succeed. That terrible struggle killed him. No man ever lived who could have passed through it unbroken.

Mr. Bradlaugh was clearly right on the point raised, but the jury went against him, apparently out of sheer prejudice. When he went out into Westminster Hall he was loudly cheered by a crowd of sympathisers, who, as the *Times* sneered, "applauded as lustily as though their champion had won." Precisely so. Their applause would have greeted him in the worst defeat. He was not a champion on whom they had "put their money." He represented their principles, and the *Times* forgot, if it ever knew, that men are devoted to leaders in proportion to the depth of the interests they espouse. Conviction "bears it out even to the edge of doom."

Now let me mention something that shows Mr. Bradlaugh's tact and consideration. My work on the *Freethinker* brought me no return. I had just read the proof of an article for Mr. Bradlaugh's paper. While we were waiting for the jury's verdict he referred to the article, and guessing my need he said, "Shall I give you the guinea now?" My answer was an expressive shrug and a motion of the eye-brows.

Taking the two coins out of his pocket, he wrapt them in a piece of paper *under the table*, and presently slipped the packet into my hand. The whole proceeding touches me deeply as I recall it. He might well have thought only of himself in that time of suspense; but he thought of me too, and the precautions he took against being seen to pay me money were expressive of his inbred delicacy. Reader do not say the incident is trivial. These little things reveal the man.

Little did I dream, as I watched Mr. Bradlaugh fighting bigotry in the law courts, that the time would come when he and I would be included in a common indictment and stand in a criminal dock together. But as the French say, it is always the unexpected that happens. Early in July, 1882, I was served with a summons from the Lord Mayor of London, ordering me to appear at the Mansion House on the following Tuesday and take my trial on a charge of Blasphemy. Two other gentlemen were included in the summons, and all three of us duly appeared. We were all members of the National Secular Society, and Mr. Bradlaugh attended to render any possible assistance. The case was adjourned to the following Monday, by which time a summons had been served on Mr. Bradlaugh, who took his place beside us in the dock. After an animated day's proceedings we were committed for trial at the Old Bailey.

The object of this prosecution was, of course, to stab Mr. Bradlaugh in the back. He had fought all the bigots face to face, and held them all at bay; so they put a stiletto into Sir Hardinge Giffard's hands, and paid him his blood-money to attack the hero from behind.

Mr. Bradlaugh had to play the fox again. He wanted to gain time, and he wanted to be tried, if at all, in the Court of Queen's Bench. He always told me that

being tried at the Old Bailey was going like a lamb to the slaughter, and that a verdict of guilty there would certainly mean twelve months' imprisonment. The obvious resource, therefore, was to obtain a writ of *certiorari* removing our indictment to the superior court. Happily it was in the long vacation, and application had to be made to a judge in chambers. By another piece of good luck, it was Mr. Justice Stephen who sat behind the table on the fatal morning when the writ had to be finally granted or refused. It was obtained on July 29, 1882. Poor Mr. Maloney, who represented the prosecution, was no match for Mr. Bradlaugh, who treated him like a child, and only let him say a word now and then as a special favor.

Roaming the law courts with Mr. Bradlaugh, I was able to see his intimate knowledge of legal practice. He threaded the labyrinth with consummate ease and dexterity. We went from office to office, where everything seemed designed to baffle suitors conducting their own cases. Our case, too, was somewhat peculiar; obsolete technicalities, only half intelligible even to experts, met us at every turn; and when we got out into the open air I felt that the thing was indeed done, but that it would puzzle omniscience to do it in exactly the same way again. Seven pounds was spent on stamps, documents, and other items, and securities for costs had to be given to the extent of six hundred pounds. As I walked home I pondered the great truth that England is a free country. I had seen with my own eyes that *there is* one law for rich and poor. But I could not help reflecting that only the rich could afford it, and that the poor might as well have no law at all.

Mr. Bradlaugh next moved to quash the indictment. He argued that the public prosecutor's fiat was bad, as it did not name the persons who were to be proceeded

against, and thus resembled a general warrant, which in the famous Wilkes case the judges had held to be invalid. On this point, however, two judges, one of them being Sir James Stephen, gave judgment against him. The case was argued on Mr. Bradlaugh's part, the judges said, with "great power and learning." For my part, I think he showed a greater knowledge of "cases" than both the legal luminaries on the bench, who laid their heads close together over many a knotty point of the argument.

Beaten on the main issue, Mr. Bradlaugh was successful, however, on the subsidiary one. Two counts were struck out of the indictment. The excision made no difference to me, but a great deal of difference to him. Two numbers of the *Freethinker* were thus disposed of bearing the imprint of the Freethought Publishing Company—under which name Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Beasant traded—and owing to the lapse of time it was impossible to open a fresh indictment. Of course I saw what Mr. Bradlaugh was driving at, and I could not but admire the way in which he made light of this point, arguing it baldly as a formal matter on which, as their lordships would see at a glance, he was absolutely entitled to a judgment. They would see that he was still open to all the other counts of the indictment, and therefore it might make very little difference, but right was right and law was law. Under the spell of his persuasive speech, it was amazing to see the judges smoothing their wrinkled fronts. I fancy they gave him his second point the more readily because they were against him on the first; indeed, they seemed to think it a pity, if not a shame, that all his learning and ability should be displayed for *nothing*.

Our indictment went into the list of Crown Cases Reserved, and did not come on for trial till the following April. Meanwhile I was prosecuted again, and failing

to get a writ of *certiorari*, owing to the flagrant bigotry of Baron Huddleston and Justice North, I was tried at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment like a common thief—as Mr. Bradlaugh had predicted.

During my trouble Mr. Bradlaugh lent me every assistance, furnishing me with legal books and advice, and visiting me in Newgate between the first and second trials, while Judge North's underlings were preparing a more pliant jury than the one which had declined to return a verdict of guilty.

In Holloway Gaol I lost sight of Mr. Bradlaugh and everyone else, except persons I had no desire to see. But one morning, early in April, 1883, the Governor informed me that Mr. Bradlaugh was going to pay me a visit, having the Home Secretary's order to see me on urgent business. The same afternoon I was marched from my cell into one of the Governor's offices, where Mr. Bradlaugh was waiting. Compared with the pale prisoners I saw day by day, he looked the very picture of health. Fresh, clean-shaven, neatly dressed, he was a most refreshing sight to eyes accustomed to rough faces and the brown convict's garb. And it was a friend too, and I could take his hand and exchange human speech with him. How vivid is my recollection of him at that moment! He seemed in the prime of life, little the worse for his terrible struggles, only the gray a trifle more decided about the temples, but the eyes full of light, and the mobile mouth full of vitality. And now he is dead! Dead! It is hard to realise. But I rang the muffled bell as he lay fighting his last battle, and I followed his corpse to the grave; and I know that the worm is busy about those leonine features, and the rain trickles through with a scent of faded flowers. Yes, it is true; he *is* dead. Dead like the king and dead like the

clown; yet living truly beyond the dust of death in the lives of others, an inextinguishable light, a vivifying fire, a passionate hope, an ardent aspiration.

> Till the Future dares
> Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
> An echo and a light unto eternity.

On the morning of April 10, 1883, I put on my own clothes and was driven in a four-wheeler from Holloway Gaol to the Law Courts, in company with Warder Smith, who superintended the wing of the prison in which a grateful country lodged and boarded me at its own expense. It was lovely spring weather, and I felt like a man new-born.

Inside the court where the great Blasphemy case was to be tried I found Mr. Bradlaugh with his usual load of law books. The court was crowded with friends of the defendants and legal gentlemen anxious to witness the performance.

Mr. Bradlaugh applied for a separate trial, on the ground that as there was no charge of conspiracy it was unjust to prejudice his case by evidence admitted against his co-defendants; and Lord Coleridge, who obviously meant to see fair play, granted the application.

Mr. Bradlaugh's position was, in one sense, the most perilous he had ever stood in. Just as his long litigation with respect to his seat in Parliament was drawing to a close, and as he believed to a *successful* close, he had to defend himself against a charge which, if he were proved guilty, would entail upon him the penalty of imprisonment. Of course it would not have been such imprisonment as I was suffering, for Queen's Bench prisoners are generally sent to the civil side of Holloway Gaol. But *any* imprisonment at such a moment gravely imperilled his prospects of success in the mighty struggle with wealth, bigotry, and political

prejudice. A sense of this fact weighed heavily upon him, but it did not impair his energy or intellectual alertness; indeed, he was one of those rare men whose faculties are sharpened by danger.

I need not dwell upon the evidence of the prosecution. It was most unsatisfactory, and failed to connect Mr. Bradlaugh with the *Freethinker*. Sir Hardinge Giffard, therefore, almost entirely confined himself to playing upon the prejudices of the jury.

Mr. Bradlaugh was perfection itself in examining and cross-examining, and was soon on the windward side of the judge, but his address to the jury was too boisterous. He *felt* too much. His adversary was not under this disadvantage, and Sir Hardinge Giffard's address to the jury, considered merely as a tactical display, was better than Mr. Bradlaugh's.

On the second day of the trial (it lasted for three days) there occurred a curious episode. Just before the adjournment for luncheon Mr. Bradlaugh intimated that when the Court re-assembled he would call his co-defendants as witnesses. Lord Coleridge replied in a low, suggestive tone, "Do you think it necessary?" Mr. Bradlaugh rose and for the first time I saw him tremble. "My lord," he said, "you put upon me a grave responsibility." "I put no responsibility upon you," said Lord Coleridge, "it is for you to decide." And the stately judge glided away in his robes of office.

If Mr. Bradlaugh put his co-defendants in the witness-box, one of two things might happen. They might decline to give evidence, as every answer would tend to criminate themselves; or they might exculpate Mr. Bradlaugh and procure their own damnation.

I do not blame Lord Coleridge for looking at the matter in this way. But I naturally looked at it in a different light. Mr. Bradlaugh was my general, and

I was his lieutenant, and it was clearly my duty to sacrifice myself. I could release him from danger with half a dozen words, and why should I hesitate to say them or he to exact them? I was already in prison, and another conviction could add little to my misfortune, whereas he was still free, and his continued freedom was just then absolutely indispensable to our common cause. For my part, I had not a moment's hesitation. But Lord Coleridge's words sank into Mr. Bradlaugh's mind, and after luncheon he announced that he would *not* call his co-defendants. His lordship looked pleased, but how he frowned when Sir Hardinge Giffard complained that *he* was deprived of an opportunity! Lord Coleridge did not say, but he *looked*—"Have you no sense of decency?" Sir Hardinge Giffard, however, was thick-skinned. He relied on Mr. Bradlaugh's sense of honor, and made it the basis of an artificial grievance. He even pretended that Mr. Bradlaugh was *afraid* to call his co-defendants. But he overreached himself by this hypocrisy, and obliged Mr. Bradlaugh to put his co-defendants into the witness-box. We were formally tendered as witnesses, Mr. Bradlaugh going no further, and leaving Sir Hardinge Giffard to do as he would. Of course he was obliged to interrogate us, or look foolish after his braggadocio, and in doing so he ruined his own case by giving us the opportunity of declaring that Mr. Bradlaugh was never in any way connected with the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Bradlaugh, of course, did not in any sense sacrifice me. It would have been contemptible on my part to let him bear any responsibility for my own deliberate action, in which he was not at all implicated, and if I had not been tendered as a witness I should have tried to tender myself.

After half an hour's deliberation the jury found Mr.

Bradlaugh not guilty. Standing up for the verdict, with pale set face, the grateful little "not" fell upon his ear, and his rigidity relaxed. Tears started to *my* eyes, and I saw the tears in *his* eyes as I squeezed his hand in speechless congratulation.

My own trial followed Mr. Bradlaugh's, and I was not found guilty. Three members of the jury held out against a verdict that would have disgraced a free country; and as the prosecution despaired of obtaining a verdict while Lord Coleridge presided at the trial, the Attorney-General was asked to allow the abandonment of proceedings. This he granted, the case was struck off the list, and I returned to my prison cell at Holloway.

. . . .

Let me now go back to the crowning incident of that long struggle between Charles Bradlaugh and the House of Commons. On May 10, 1881, the House passed a resolution authorising the Sergeant-at-Arms to prevent Mr. Bradlaugh from entering. On June 20, the jury gave a verdict in Mr. Newdegate's favor for the £500 penalty and costs. A motion for a new trial failed, and Mr. Bradlaugh appealed to the country. Enthusiastic meetings were held in his behalf, and he prepared a fresh *coup*. It had to be something striking, and it was. On the morning of August 3 Palace Yard and Westminster Hall were thronged with his supporters. Every one was armed with a petition, which he had a legal right to take to the House of Commons. Mr. Bradlaugh himself drove up in a hansom cab, and entered the precincts of the House by the private door. He made his way to the door of the House itself and tried to enter by a sudden effort, but he was seized by fourteen officials and stalwart policemen, picked for the work, and thrust back through the private passage into Palace Yard. Not

expecting such indignity, he contested every inch of the ground. Inspector Denning said he never thought that one man could have offered such resistance. The small muscles of both his arms were ruptured, and a subsequent attack of erysipelas put his life in jeopardy.

When he was finally thrust on to the pavement in Palace Yard his coat was torn and the rest of his garments were disarranged. His face was livid with the intense exertion when I saw him a minute afterwards. There he stood, a great mass of panting, valiant manhood, his features set like granite, and his eyes fixed upon the doorway before him. He seemed to see nothing but that doorway. I spoke to him, and he seemed not to hear. I believe a mighty struggle was going on within him, perhaps the greatest struggle of his life. He had suffered a frightful indignity, he must have been tempted to avenge it, and he had but to hold up his hand to bring around and behind him the myriads who stood outside the railings. The action would have been impolitic, but what a temptation he crushed down, and what an effort it necessitated! Never was his heroic nature more sorely tried. He justified his mastery of others by his mastery of himself. How small in comparison seemed the mob of his enemies! I never admired him more than at that moment. He was superb, sublime. They had wound their meshes about him, and the lion had burst them. One swift, daring stroke had frustrated all their plans. He who was to be quietly suppressed by resolutions of the House had cut the knot of their policy asunder, made himself the hero of the hour, and fixed the nation's eyes on his splendid audacity.

Reaction set in after that terrible struggle, and he accepted a chair that was brought him. Several members passed as he sat there. One of them was the coward, Frank Hugh O'Donnell. He had a lady on

his arm, and he passed with her between himself and Mr. Bradlaugh, so that her dress trailed over the hero's feet. It was a wretched display of insolence and cowardice. But the lady must be exonerated. She looked annoyed, her cheeks reddened, and her eyelids fell. It is so hard for a woman to resist the attraction of courage, and the coward by her side must have suffered in her estimation.

There was a crowded meeting that evening at the Hall of Science, at which I had the honor of speaking. Mr. Bradlaugh's greeting was tremendous. Two days afterwards he was seriously ill.

During that great constitutional struggle I was present at many "Bradlaugh" meetings, and I never witnessed such enthusiasm as he excited. No man of my time had such a devoted following.

The last "Bradlaugh" demonstration I attended was on February 15, 1883, in Trafalgar-square. Seventy or eighty thousand people were present. There were four speakers, and three of them are dead, Joseph Arch being the sole survivor. Mr. Adams, of Northampton, lived to see his old friend take his seat and do good work in the House of Commons, became himself Mayor of Northampton, and died universally respected by his fellow-townsmen; William Sharman, a brave, true man, is buried at Preston; and Charles Bradlaugh sleeps his long sleep at Woking.

For another twelve months I attended no public meetings except the silent ones on the exercise ground of Holloway Gaol. But I saw Mr. Bradlaugh at several demonstrations on various subjects after my imprisonment, and I could perceive no abatement of his popularity. He had his enemies and detractors, but the spontaneous outburst of feeling at his death proved his hold on the popular heart.

* * * *

I must now leap forward to that dreadful illness which left him a broken man. Years before, in 1882, when we were roaming the Law Courts together, he tapped his chest as he coughed, and seeing my anxious expression he told me that he brought up a good deal of phlegm in the morning, and that strangers who heard him clearing his chest would fancy he was very ill. But he looked so well that I soon dismissed the unpleasant fact, though it returned before his breakdown when I saw he was obliged to cancel engagements. I heard in 1884, though not from himself, that he had some heart trouble. But I was far from prepared for the shattering illness that laid him low in October, 1889.

When I called to see him after his partial recovery I was shocked by his appearance. He looked twenty years older, grey, and infirm. I sat down half-dazed. Theoretically I knew he was mortal, but I did not realise it as a fact until I saw him thin and pale from the valley of the shadow of death. His mind was clear enough, however; and although everything about him was pathetic he was quite self-collected.

One thing he said to me I shall never forget. There had been talk of his wavering in his Freethought, and as he referred to this folly he spoke in grave impressive tones. Pointing to the humble bed, he said, "When I lay there and all was black the thing that troubled me least was the convictions of my life."

Words and accents were alike solemn. The cold shadow of death seemed to linger in the room. A moment or two later he said with a broken voice, "The Freethought party is a party that I love."

The memory of that interview will always be a precious possession. I treasure it with the sacred things of my life. I had seen and touched the naked sincerity of a great soul.

When Mr. Bradlaugh returned from India I called on him, and found him greatly improved by his voyage. I waited for him a few minutes in his library, as he was at lunch, and the doctors attached great importance to regularity in his meals. He came into the room with a most genial smile. His air was fresh and buoyant, and he walked over to me quickly, holding out his hand all the way. I took it heartily, and had a good look at him, which satisfied and yet dissatisfied me. He was certainly better, but I could not help feeling that his constitution was irrecoverably broken. Never again could I hope to see the grand Bradlaugh of the old fighting days. His mind was as brave and alert as ever, but the body was too obviously disabled.

He showed me some of his Indian presents, of which he was justly proud, and then we sat down to chat. He was full of his voyage and the kindness he had experienced on every side. His reception in India had exceeded his highest anticipations, and he was looking forward to work in the House of Commons on behalf of our great Dependency.

Speaking of his financial prospects, he told me he had received offers of work from several magazine editors. But he added, "one doesn't know how long it will last; 'tis a precarious business." His face clouded for a moment, and I saw he was more troubled than he cared to say.

One thing he told me which I had no right to repeat while he lived, but I may repeat it without a breach of confidence now that he is dead.

During his brief stay in India he could have had plenty of money if he had been less scrupulous. There was nothing very dishonourable in accepting money from rich Hindoos, for he was poor and broken in health, and he was fighting for their best interests. But he was too proud to take it, and when wealthy natives

were calling on him, he always took the precaution to have an English friend in the room.

"No," he said to me, "I cannot do that. I'll live like the old Bradlaugh, or I'll go under."

He lived like the old Bradlaugh, and he went under. He took to the platform again to earn a livelihood, and it killed him, as his doctors had foreseen. I implored him at the time not to resume the lecturing. He was going to fulfil an old-standing engagement at Manchester in the vast St. James's Hall, and I begged him to cancel it. He replied that he could not afford to forfeit twenty pounds. "What is that to your life?" I asked. He only smiled grimly. His mind was made up, and he was not to be bent by advice.

On Sunday morning, February 16, 1890, Mr. Bradlaugh resigned his presidency of the National Secular Society, which he had held for so many years. The Hall of Science was packed with members, chiefly from the London district, but many of them from the provinces.

The scene was infinitely pathetic. One sentiment reigned in every heart. The Old Guard was taking leave of its General. Some of them had fought around him for thirty years, and the farewell was a mutilation of their very lives. Tears were streaming down strong faces; and they coursed down the strongest face of all, the face of Charles Bradlaugh, and plashed on the table before him. For a while he let them fall, and then he controlled his grief and rose to speak. But the words would not come. His frame shook with a great sob, and he sat down again. A second time he rose and failed. But the third time his strong will prevailed, and he began to speak in low, trembling tones.

Never was I so struck with his oratorical powers as on this occasion. Without once lifting his voice above

the note of conversation, he swayed the meeting for a full half-hour, as easily and universally as the wind billows a cornfield.

In resigning the presidency he thought it his duty to nominate a successor, and his choice was ratified by the meeting. He handed me the president's hammer after a solemn, impressive apostrophe, in which he expressed his hope that he might thank me, after many years, for good, loyal work as leader; and when I had acknowledged the lofty honor he rose to vacate the chair. Naturally I declined to let him do anything of the kind, and for a moment the two Presidents stood together in friendly altercation. But for once he gave way, and Charles Bradlaugh filled the chair to the last.

Resigning the Presidency did not mean retirement from the National Secular Society. At his own suggestion Mr. Bradlaugh was elected a life-member. He was thus a member of the Society up to the last moment of his life. Nor was he an inactive one. I frequently had occasion to consult him, and one of his last bits of work was the drawing up of a long document for the Society on Secular Burials.

Months rolled by, and the evening came for the great debate on the Eight Hours Bill between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Hyndman. St. James's Hall was packed to suffocation. I sat on the platform near my old leader, and I saw how the effort was telling on him. His opponents in the meeting behaved with incredible brutality. Some of them laughed aloud when he said, "Believe me, this has tried me more than I had thought." But now the hero they laughed at is dead, and they *know* that he spoke the truth.

The last time I saw Mr. Bradlaugh in public was on Wednesday evening, December 10, 1890, when he lectured at the Hall of Science on behalf of the Forder

Testimonial Fund. I believe that was the last lecture he delivered there, if not the last lecture he delivered anywhere. He dealt with the Evidences of Christianity, in reference to Archdeacon Watkins' lectures on the Fourth Gospel, and assuredly he was as firmly sceptical as ever. At the close of the lecture he spoke of his theological position, and declared that he could not conceive of any such change of mind as glib gossipers were asserting of him.

The weather was extremely foggy, and Mr. Bradlaugh was ill. He ought not to have been there at all. After struggling painfully through the lecture, he sat down and waited for discussion. A Christian opponent rose, and Mr. Bradlaugh replied; but, being in the chair, I would not allow a second speech, and I was glad to see him well wrapt-up, and once more in the care of his devoted daughter.

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Having concluded my reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh in relation to the *events* of his life, I shall wind up with a little personal talk of a more general character.

I have already referred to Mr. Bradlaugh's extraordinary knowledge of the law. This was strikingly illustrated after the so-called Trafalgar-square riots. The Tories made a wanton aggression on the right of public meeting in London, and found a ready instrument of tyranny in Sir Charles Warren. No doubt there is much to be said against promiscuous meetings in Trafalgar-square at all hours of the day and night, but it was a high-handed act of brutality to prohibit *all* meetings directly it was known that the London Radicals were convening a Sunday demonstration on the Irish question. While the Radicals were chafing under this insult they held several stormy meetings to discuss their best policy, and at last a Committee was

appointed to find out, if possible, the legal rights of the people and the Crown. I was a member of that committee, and I am able to state that although we waited on several eminent lawyers, it was only from Mr. Bradlaugh that we obtained any light. The others talked vaguely about the right of public meeting, and the primary and secondary uses of public thoroughfares, but Mr. Bradlaugh gave us the *facts* of the case. Trafalgar-square was Crown property, its control was vested in the Commissioner of Works, and at any moment it could be absolutely closed to the British public.

This had escaped the other lawyers, who did not find it in the Statutes at Large, from which the Trafalgar-square Act, probably as being a private one, had been excluded. Nor was it known to the Government when Sir Charles Warren issued his first proclamation. As Chief Commissioner of Police he had no authority over the Square, and until he obtained the order of its proper guardians, which he did a week later, his proclamation was only a piece of waste paper. Mr. Bradlaugh saw this, though he said nothing, when the demonstration committee called upon him a few days before Bloody Sunday. He told them that he had an engagement in the provinces on that day, but if they would postpone the demonstration until the following Sunday he would himself lead it to Trafalgar-square. His offer was not accepted, however; for the committee resented the condition he stipulated, namely, that he should have absolute control of the arrangements. They thought he was taking too much upon himself. They did not reflect that if he who takes power without responsibility is a despot, he who takes responsibility without power is a fool. It was their action, and not his, that lost the battle.

Mr. Bradlaugh made no public parade of his brave

offer. It was not his way. But it is due to his memory that it should be put on record, so that posterity may know the extent of his generous courage.

There can be no doubt, I think, that Mr. Bradlaugh was less popular with the working-classes in London after he took peaceable possession of his seat in Parliament. The London masses love a fighter, and while he was battling for his seat he was, in my opinion, the most popular figure in the metropolis. The Radical workmen never tired of his demonstrations. He could bring fifty or a hundred thousand of them together at a few days' notice. And the other speakers were, for the most part, only padding to fill up the time. It was "Bradlaugh" the multitude came for. They waited to hear him speak, they applauded him to the skies, and when he had done they dispersed. And on such occasions he was magnificent. No one can conceive the power of the man who never saw him at one of these demonstrations. He stood like a Pharos, and the light of his face kindled the crests of the living waves around him.

But he was out of sympathy with the Socialist movement, which began to spread just as he took his seat; and being assiduous in Parliament, he was drawn more and more from "the Clubs," where his libellers and detractors wagged their tongues to some purpose. His strong individualism, as well as his practical good sense, made him bitterly hostile to the mildest proposals for putting the people's industrial interests into the hands of Government departments. And being a man of most positive quality, it was natural that he should excite the hatred of the more fanatical Socialists; a sentiment which, I cannot help thinking, he exasperated by his apparent denial of the generosity of their aims. There are men in the Socialist camp (and I say it without being a Socialist) who are neither "poets"

nor "fools"—though it is no disgrace to be the former; men who have studied with severity and sincerity, who have made sacrifices for conviction, and who were sometimes hurt by his antipathy. But, on the other hand, he was bitterly goaded by Socialist adversaries, who denied his honesty, and held him up to undeserved scorn as the hireling of "the classes"—a charge which the more sensitive among them must now repent, for his death has revealed his poverty.

Mr. Bradlaugh was naturally irritable, but the irritability was only on the surface. The waves were easily raised, but there was plenty of quiet sea beneath. Though giants are often phlegmatic, his big frame embedded highly-strung nerves. When he was put out he could storm, and he was misunderstood by those who took the mood for the man. Had they seen him in the melting mood they would have learnt that Charles Bradlaugh was a more composite personality than they imagined.

During the last year or two of his life he underwent a wonderful softening. A beautiful Indian-summer light rested upon him. He was like a granite rock, which the sweet grass has overgrown, and from whose crevices peep lovely wild flowers.

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As President of the National Secular Society he did a great work. I do not think he had a pronounced faculty for organisation. But he was a firm, sagacious leader, with the personal magnetism to attract devotion. That he was never overbearing I will not affirm. But it is easy to organise sheep. One good dog will do it. Mr. Bradlaugh had to hold together a different species, with leaping legs, butting horns, and a less gregarious tendency.

He was a splendid chairman to push through a mass of business, but he shone less on ordinary occasions.

An ideal chairman, when not promoting his own schemes, should be like a midwife; he should aim at a quick delivery and a safe birth. Mr. Bradlaugh did not always observe this rule. But every man has the defects of his qualities, and even the sun must be taken with its spots.

Mr. Bradlaugh's speeches at the annual Conferences of the National Secular Society are better reading than his political speeches. Being less in the world of practice there, and more in the world of principle, he gave play to his ideal nature, his words took color, and metaphors flashed like jewels in the sword of his orations. It was a signal proof of his power, that after a whole day's exhausting work, both to himself and his audience, he never failed to rouse the wildest enthusiasm.

Now that Mr. Bradlaugh is dead I do not hesitate to repeat what I said during his lifetime, that his Freethought work was the most fecund and important. Even his great battle against the House of Commons was for religious freedom against bigotry, and his one great legislative achievement was the Act dealing with Oaths and Affirmation. His staunchest political supporters were his Freethought followers. His lectures, his personal influence, and his reputation, leavened the public mind more than his orthodox enemies suspected, and he created a vast quantity of raw material to be utilised by his successors in Secular organisation.

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In the foregoing pages I have attempted no complete sketch of Charles Bradlaugh. I have written, not a monograph, but a number of rough jottings. Yet I hope I have conveyed an impression of the man, in some degree faithful, to those who may have been imperfectly acquainted with him; and I trust the

features I have presented, however baldly outlined, will be recognised by those who knew and loved him.

When all is said and done, I think the final impression one retains of Charles Bradlaugh is his *heroism.* His was cast in a great mould of mind and character, as well as body. Like every hero the world has ever seen, he had his defects and failings, for it is given to no man to be perfect. But positive excellence, with all its drawbacks, is far above negative merit. "Thou shalt" is loftier virtue than "thou shalt not," and the hero is superior to the saint.

Charles Bradlaugh was a colossus of manhood. He was one to design, and dare, and do. The beaten path of mediocrity had no attraction for that potent spirit. He belonged to the heroic type which seeks perilous ways and fresh conquests. Like the hero of one of Browning's poems, he was "ever a fighter." In stormy times he naturally rose to the top. He was one of the select few, not of those who enrich the world with great discoveries, or new principles, or subtle perceptions of beauty—but those who appeal to the heroism of man's nature, without which he is at best but a splendid beast, and who minister to that sense of dignity which is the supreme necessity of our race.

> The elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

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